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| Linden S.T.E.A.M. Academy |
| Governing Board – By Laws |
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**Linden S.T.E.A.M. Academy**

**Governing Board By-Laws**

# Article I

## Core Value

We believe all children will thrive using Science Technology Engineering Arts and Math (S.T.E.A.M) as our focus while collaborating with school, home, and community.

## Mission

The Linden S.T.E.A.M. Academy mission is to provide a rigorous educational program to meet the individual needs of our unique population. Our students will be provided a well-rounded education with a focus on S.T.E.A.M to accelerate learning in their areas of strength and interest. Students will successfully meet the common core standards through instruction that is tailored to meet their unique needs by engaging in project based learning and inquiry based instruction.

## Vision

The LSA, a self-governing, collaborative learning community will inspire a lifelong love of learning and active participation as global citizens.

# Article II

## History

The Linden S.T.E.A.M. Academy has created this school-based initiative with the encouragement and support of the Malden Public Schools School Committee, Malden Teachers Association, the central office, and the community. The proposed elements will fundamentally change the way in which the school operates with students, staff, families, partners, and the district. The Readiness goals will be used as a catalyst to educate the whole child, increasing opportunities for academic instruction and enrichment and providing community based learning experiences to which our students would otherwise not have access. These goals will improve student achievement and get all students to proficiency, as well as prepare them with the skills to become contributing members of the 21st century. We will assure that all learning is connected to real work/life experiences thus bridging the perceived gap between “school” and “life”.

## Purpose of the Linden S.T.E.A.M. Academy’s Governing Board

The Linden S.T.E.A.M. Academy’s Governing Board will be charged to carry out the school’s vision and mission and to set school policies as agreed to by the Malden School Committee and Malden Teachers Association as a Malden Public School in the proposal approved June, 2012. The Innovation Design Plan and the autonomies granted as part of this initiative, as well as state laws, guide the Board’s work in terms of budget, staffing, calendar/ schedules, curriculum, and governance. The Governing Board will align their work to the original vision as well as Innovation School plan and autonomies. The scope of the Board’s work includes:

* Maintaining the school vision;
* Annually reviewing the school’s progress on indicators of student engagement and achievement
* Ensuring a plan is in place to address gaps in student achievement.
* Developing school policies;
* Approving the annual school budget
* Approving the annual election to work agreement which includes a dispute resolution process

As well, the Board will develop a long term strategic plan focused on outcomes to guide the overall work of the school as a whole. The Board is charged with securing resources and partnerships into the school to support the vision and strategic planning. Implementation of Governing Board decisions as well as the overall management of the school is the primary role of the Principal and the Linden S.T.E.A.M. Academy faculty.

# Article III

## Commitment of the Governing Board Members

Each member of the Governing Board is expected to perform the following activities:

* Members will become familiar with the vision of the Innovation design plan of June, 2012, and will attempt, through deliberation and deed, to act in the best interests of the Linden S.T.E.A.M. Academy vision and school community.
* Members will engage in and encourage communication with the members of the LSA Community so that decisions reflect school-wide agreement as much as possible.
* Members will honor all aspects of confidentiality and meeting norms.
* Members will adhere to the rules, regulations, and policies of the School Board, the Innovation School autonomies, the LSA bylaws, and state and federal laws.
* The absence of a board member from three regularly scheduled meetings within the school year may constitute a voluntary resignation pending Board review.
* Members will actively participate in the board committee work.

# Article IV

## The Linden S.T.E.A.M. Academy Governing Board Membership

## Membership

The LSA Governing Board will have **17 voting members**, as follows:

* 6 Professional Staff including, 5 Teachers with Professional Status and the Linden S.T.E.A.M. Academy Principal
* 3 LSA Faculty At-Large, including 2 paid LSA employees and 1 MTA Representative
* 5 Parent/Guardian Representatives
* 1 School Committee Member (or designee)
* 2 Community and/or University/Business Partners (to be determined by the Governing Board members).

### Officers

The officers for the Linden S.T.E.A.M. Academy shall be elected from the membership of the Governing Board. The officers include Co-chairs, the Secretary, and the Treasurer.

Any member of the LSA Governing Board may self-nominate or nominate any other Board member to be a candidate for a Governing Board officer.

The duties of the officers shall be those usually performed by such officers and any special duties assigned by the Board.

Co-chairs:The Co-chairs carry the major responsibility for the LSA in the community. The Co-chairs lead the Board as it develops broad policies, does long-range strategic planning, and carries out the tasks necessary to achieving the purpose of the school. The Co-chairs work with the Principal to prepare an agenda for the regular and special meetings of the Board. The Co-chairs preside at all meetings and sign the minutes thereof. The Co-chairs serve as Co-chairs of the Executive Committee. The Co-chairs act as key representatives of the LSA board and school community to the Superintendent and Malden Public School’s School Committee.

The Secretary:The Secretary is responsible for recording the proceedings of the meetings of the Board, keeping records of attendance, issuing notices of meetings, maintaining and preparing accurate minutes and seeing that permanent documents are in safe keeping. The minutes are the official documentation for the organization. The Secretary of the Board will serve as the communications liaison and shall distribute the Board minutes to all stakeholders including staff, parents/guardians, and community members.

The Treasurer**:** The Treasurer is responsible for seeing that all funds received and expended are handled in accordance with good business practices and within the policies authorized by the board. The treasurer will work with LSA principal to produce an annual report of the school’s budget provided at the May meeting of each school year. The Treasurer will co-chair the finance committee with the principal.

## Committees

All committees will represent a balance of representation of board members. The executive and personnel committees will be composed by current members of the board only. The Finance Committee and all other ad hoc committees and work groups may include other faculty and community members who are not current board members as determined by the scope of the work.

Executive Committee**:** The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of the Board and the Principal. The Executive Committee shall have the power to act between meetings of the Board, to make recommendations to the Board, and to carry out special responsibilities assigned by the Board. It will meet in cases where strict confidentiality is required and will not be open to the public. Any interim action must be reported to the full Board at the next meetings. The Co-chairs lead the work of this committee.

Personnel Advisory Committee:The Personnel Advisory Committee shall be chaired by the Principal. Its duties shall include: ensuring that a process is in place for hiring of staff in accordance with the Malden Education Association and the Malden Public Schools. In a situation that may result in a displacement of staff, the faculty shall abstain from participating in the decision.

Finance Advisory Committee: The Finance Advisory Committee will be comprised of Board Members and community partners. This group will assume much of the responsibility of meeting the fundraising and development objectives of the school. The Advisory Committee will work on identifying individuals and organizations that are interested in becoming active or involved with our funding priorities. The Governing Board will set the funding priorities with the Advisory Committee.

Other Committees:The Board may choose to establish other committees as needed to address the core work and implementation of the school’s vision and mission.

# Article V

## Election and Selection of Members

Membership on the Governing Board will be determined in the following ways:

• The school’s Malden Education Association representatives will be responsible for conducting elections for the teachers with professional status and faculty at-large representatives.

• The Linden S.T.E.A.M. Academy School Parent/Guardian Board Members will be responsible for conducting elections for the parent/guardian representatives.

• The Governing Board will select the community representatives.

### Terms of Service

Nominations for the teachers with professional status, faculty at-large, and parent/guardian representatives will be by self-nomination. The election for teachers with professional status and faculty at-large representatives will be conducted in May of each election year. The nomination process for teachers with professional status and faculty at-large representatives will be open for the month of April. Election of parent/guardian representatives will take place during the annual Exhibition Night of each election year. The nomination process for parent/guardian representatives will begin in March and close on the Friday before April vacation. Community/Partner members will be reviewed and/or selected each September.

The elected board members serving as of September, 2012 will be considered the “first foundational” board.

Beginning in September, 2014, and each election thereafter, a portion of board members will vacate their membership. Beginning with 3 parent/guardian representatives vacating in 2014, the number of parent/guardian representatives vacating their board membership will alternate rotating from 3 to 2 members in a given election cycle. In 2014, 3 LSA staff members will vacate their board membership. In each election thereafter, a total of 4 LSA staff members, including teachers with professional status and faculty at-large members, will vacate their board membership. Newly elected members will be elected for 2 year terms ensuring a balance of opportunities for new members to the board and continuity of experienced members. The purpose of this process is to ensure that board memberships reflect experience and history of the board’s work.

Any teacher with professional status or faculty at-large representative vacancy that occurs during a member’s term shall be filled by a special election. A special election will be conducted prior to the next regular board meeting following the vacancy. The newly elected member shall serve the remainder of the vacating person’s term of service. If a parent/guardian representative vacates their membership, the parent/guardian runner-up from the previous election will be offered the position prior to the next regular meeting following the vacancy and shall serve the remainder of the vacating person’s term of service.

All Governing Board officers shall be nominated and elected by a majority vote of a quorum present at the regular summer meeting, and shall hold office for a term of one (1) year or until their successors are elected. Any vacancy during the term shall be filled by a special election to be held at the next regular meeting following the vacancy and shall serve the remainder of the vacating person’s term of service.

The Governing Board Co-chairs shall solicit officer nominations from Governing Board members and volunteers during the regular June meeting and close the nominations prior to the summer regular meeting. Prior to the regular summer meeting, the Co-chairs will notify board members of the nominees and request a vote during the summer meeting. August 1st will begin the new term of elected officers.

Governing Board officer positions will be up for re-election yearly.

Any vacancies created during the year will be filled through timely elections or selections for the respective members as described in Article V.

All terms of service have a maximum length of 6 years (three election cycles) with the exception of the LSA principal and school committee representative. Any former board member wishing to seek re-election to the board after completing 6 years of service must wait one (1) election cycle of two (2) years before running for election.

# Article VI

## Guidelines for Meetings

Quorum:Fifty percent plus one of the total members of the full Board will constitute a quorum for decisions to be made at any official meeting of the Governing Board, provided however that at least three (3) teachers with professional status representatives, two (2) faculty at-large representatives, and three (3) parent/guardian representatives are present. Each board meeting will have a record of attendance of Board members.

Meetings:A minimum **of nine** regularGoverning Board meetings will be scheduled and held each school year including at least one meeting during the summer months. All governing board meetings are open to the public except when in Executive Session for issues according to the Open Meeting Law. The dates for the coming year’s meetings will be decided during the last regular meeting held in June of the prior school year.

**Special Meetings** may be called:

1. By the Governing Board co-chairs. Within three days the co-chairs or secretary shall notify the Governing Board members of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting in writing or by email. The meeting shall be schedule no sooner than five (5) business days from the date of notification.
2. Upon request of the Governing Board members. Upon receipt of a petition, signed by 3 or more members of the board, calling for a special meeting, the board co-chairs shall call such a meeting. The co-chairs or secretary shall notify in writing or by e-mail, the members of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting within three business days. The meeting shall be schedule no sooner than five (5) business days from the date of notification.

Decision-making:Decisions of the Governing Board will be made by consensus, meaning those present can accept the decision. (Refer to the attached definition of consensus and the process for reaching consensus.) In the event that, after a prolonged discussion of an issue, consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be made by majority vote.

Notice of Meetings:Board meeting are subject to the state Open Meeting Law which requires posting of each meeting notice at least 48 hours prior to the meeting at a public location. In addition, the Linden S.T.E.A.M. Academy will provide staff and parents/guardians with the list of all the meetings for the year and the school community shall be informed of Linden S.T.E.A.M. Academy Board decisions.

Communication:At a minimum, the minutes of every Governing Board meeting will be printed, available, and posted for all parents/guardians, faculty, and students in English within 2 weeks of each board meeting. Language accommodations/ translations for other language groups will be made available upon request.

Governing Board meeting agendas:The Co-chairs in consultation with the Principal will be responsible for preparing the meeting agendas and announcing the meeting date, location, and agenda in advance of each meeting. Any member of the Linden S.T.E.A.M. Academy community may bring an issue to one of the Governing Board representatives with a request that it be placed on the agenda of an upcoming meeting. That representative is responsible for determining whether the agenda item is appropriate for Governing Board discussion, and then communicating the request to the co-chairs.

# Article IV

## Effective Date and Amendment of Bylaws:

Upon approval of the LSA proposal by the School Committee, these by-laws will be in effect.

The proposed bylaws herein and any subsequent amendments to these bylaws will be posted for a period of two weeks for public input. After two weeks the bylaws will become effective upon ratification by 75% of the board members approving the amendment to the by-laws.

## What is consensus decision-making?

The word 'consensus' derives from the Latin *cum* meaning 'with' or 'together with', and *sentire* meaning to 'think' or 'feel'. Thus, etymologically, 'consensus' means to 'think or feel together'.

As a decision-making process, consensus aims to be:

* **Inclusive**: As many stakeholders as possible should be involved in the consensus decision-making process.
* **Participatory**: The consensus process should actively solicit the input and participation of all decision-makers.
* **Co-operative**: Participants in an effective consensus process should strive to reach the best possible decision for the group and all of its members, rather than opt to pursue a majority opinion, potentially to the detriment of a minority.
* **Egalitarian**: All members of a consensus decision-making body should be afforded, as much as possible, equal input into the process. All members have the opportunity to table, amend and veto or "block" proposals.
* **Solution-oriented**: An effective consensus decision-making body strives to emphasize common agreement over differences and reach effective decisions using compromise and other techniques to avoid or resolve mutually-exclusive positions within the group.

***The Process of Consensus Decision-making***



Once an agenda for discussion has been set and, optionally, the ground rules for the meeting have been agreed upon, each item of the agenda is addressed in turn. Typically, each decision arising from an agenda item follows through a simple structure:

* **Discussion of the item:** The item is discussed with the goal of identifying opinions and information on the topic at hand. The general direction of the group and potential proposals for action are often identified during the discussion.
* **Formation of a proposal:** Based on the discussion, a formal decision proposal on the issue is presented to the group.
* **Call for consensus:** The facilitator of the decision-making body calls for consensus on the proposal. Each member of the group usually must actively state their agreement with the proposal, often by using the “Fist or Five” hand signal to avoid the group from interpreting silence or inaction as agreement. (Five means very strong agreement; four means strong agreement; three signals “I can live with this decision”; two indicates agreement with reservations; one signals disagreement; fist equal blocking the decision, very strong disagreement) Any member voting with a one or a fist, block the decision from moving forward; reasons for their dissention must be declared so they can resolve the concerns and reach consensus. The voting using the “Fist or Five” approach is designed to have a transparent process.
* **Identification and addressing of concerns:** If consensus is not achieved, each dissenter presents his or her concerns on the proposal, potentially starting another round of discussion to address or clarify the concern.
* **Modification of the proposal:** The proposal is amended or re-phrased in an attempt to address the concerns of the decision-makers. The process then returns to the call for consensus and the cycle is repeated until a satisfactory decision is made.