



November 27, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the nonprofit TeamCFA Foundation regarding its submission of a charter school application to the North Carolina Department of Education.

As president of the Core Knowledge Foundation, I have had the distinct pleasure over 20 years of working directly with the key leadership of TeamCFA, including its founder John Bryan, Tony Helton, the chief executive officer, and Tony Best, the director of school support, since its inception. Throughout this long-term relationship, the leadership and staff of TeamCFA have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to making available tuition-free access to a rigorous and exemplary academic experience to the families and students in the communities they serve.

TeamCFA schools pledge as part of their charter to implement a curriculum based on the *Core Knowledge Sequence*, a set of curricular guidelines that put the emphasis on teaching and learning an enabling core of broadly shared knowledge—enabling because it builds strong foundations for later learning and opens doors to effective participation and mutual understanding in the wider society. Such knowledge is possessed by successful adults and taken for granted by literate writers and speakers. It is the broad and diverse knowledge that is the key to literacy and makes responsible citizenship possible.

Both the realities of cognitive science and the ideals of social justice support the need for knowledge-based schooling. Cognitive science confirms these facts:

- Children can advance educationally only when they have the expected prior knowledge.
- They can become better readers only by building extensive knowledge of the world.
- They can become effective members of the wider society only by sharing the knowledge taken for granted by literate writers and speakers in that society.

Social justice demands that we give all children equal access to important shared knowledge. Only by specifying the knowledge that all children should share can we guarantee equal access to that knowledge.

Thousands of schools across the country, many of whom serve at risk student populations, are successfully implementing the Core Knowledge curriculum and approach. The [Core Knowledge Language Arts™](#) (CKLA) program was piloted in 10 public schools in New York City and an additional seven schools throughout the country, including rural and suburban schools. These diverse schools comprised 172 classrooms, 200 teachers and 4,466 students. Across these schools, the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch ranged from 30 to 99%, and the percentage of students for whom English is a second language ranged from 15 to 60%.

[Results from the three-year pilot](#) of CKLA in kindergarten through second grade in 10 New York City public schools show that students in the schools using CKLA outperformed their peers in 10 comparison schools on measures of reading, science, and social studies.



Details about other research initiatives regarding the use of the Core Knowledge curriculum and approach may be found [here](#).

Results such as those highlighted above can be achieved, however, only if the Core Knowledge curriculum is implemented with fidelity. The Team CFA Foundation focuses on the quality of implementation, providing schools and teachers within its network with the resources they need to be successful. This includes ensuring that teachers have the opportunity for professional development to learn how to implement Core Knowledge, as well as providing each school and its staff with frequent, onsite access to an instructional coach, i.e., someone who has demonstrated exemplary implementation practices within the classroom, as well as the ability to work collaboratively with other educators. In addition, the Team CFA Foundation further validates the work of its internal staff by engaging a professional licensed by the Core Knowledge Foundation to conduct annual on-site visits designed to provide objective third-party feedback and recommendations to the teachers, coaches, and school leadership.

I am pleased to reiterate the support of the Core Knowledge Foundation for the Team CFA Foundation as it expands its schools and makes its services available in new communities.

Sincerely,

Linda Bevilacqua
President

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