



~ FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ON JULY 30, 2020 ~

**SUMTER STEAM CHARTER (SSC) SECURES
FORMER LIBERTY STREET ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL FACILITY FOR ITS PRIMARY
ACADEMY CAMPUS & LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN
TO RENAME CHARTER**

SCDE'S Office of School Facilities & SCDOT Division of School Engineering have both approved the property acquisition for 15 School Street. Thanks to the amazing generosity of an anonymous donor, this building will officially serve as the Primary Academy Campus to educate our PK-2 scholars. An extensive renovation project will begin in early Fall to bring this building back to life and offer a world-class, STEAM-based education to our young scholars. The board looks forward to receiving a renovation presentation from the school design professional at the August 10th meeting of the Founding Board of Directors.

Now that a facility has been acquired, the board is engaging the community in providing a more permanent name to honor both the legacy of the former Liberty Street Elementary School and also the educational programming model. The board understands that SSC's facility arrangements will significantly impact the degree to which it experiences success in achieving its mission of providing all students with equal access to a world class PK-12 education in an academically rigorous & student-centered learning environment, creating graduates who will be thoughtful and engaged citizens prepared to take on the leadership challenges of the 21st century." Regarding the school's location, Chairman Greg A. Thompson describes it as intentional: "The establishment of the charter school could be one part of a holistic approach to help lead an educational renaissance in Sumter and will encourage further growth, hope, and a sense of pride, while being a launching pad for better education opportunities in our community. Thus, SSC has the potential to serve as a key lever for holistic neighborhood revitalization by helping to close the opportunity gap in building a strong, economically diverse community. This board and our supporting stakeholders believe this will positively impact local education as a whole and also, more importantly, encourage further development throughout our community, improve the quality of life, and be a mechanism to recruit new families to Sumter while providing a world-class education system for those that already call Sumter home."

The board received a presentation on the historical context of the building at its July 13th meeting from local historian Sammy Way. Chief of Staff Dr. Trevor Ivey says that "it is quite symbolic that the school begin its work of transforming the lives of its youngest scholars in the former Liberty Street Elementary School." Built in 1949, the Liberty Street Elementary School was erected for the purpose of educating African American children in Sumter under the auspices of District #17. The school was the first public school for African Americans in Sumter to matriculate from grades 1-6. Dr. Ivey further explains the symbolism and connection to SSC's mission: "In much of the Sumter community, the Liberty legacy is synonymous with the advancement of individuals who were, at one time, marginalized by an existing system. In the presence of continued academic inequity, we would like to officially rename SSC in honor of the Liberty legacy to further align ourselves with a legacy that is already associated with the plight of those before us who sought social justice and quality."

Dr. Ivey further adds that "the board wishes to continue the Liberty legacy of excellence & pride by providing school choice to Sumter County families who simply want a fresh alternative to the status quo." The public is encouraged to provide their input in the renaming of the charter school via a short survey available on social media or its website, which will be included as an action item on the agenda for the August 10th meeting of the board. Should the board decide to approve a name change, it will have to also have to receive approval from its authorizer, the SC Public Charter School District. Alumni are especially encouraged to share their feedback and can do so by calling or texting 803.216.5745 in lieu of the online survey. To date, the board has had conversations with several Liberty alumni to establish more meaningful connections.

Please direct questions to Dr. Trevor Ivey, Chief of Staff, via email at tivey@sumtersteamcharter.org.

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