

**NEBRASKA TAXPAYERS FOR FREEDOM COMMENTS TO STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION: March 6, 2026.**

Good morning. Doug Kagan, Omaha, representing NE Taxpayers for Freedom. My comments pertain to the recent board vote on issuing funds to the Learning Community. The intent of this funding is to offer financial assistance to improve student outcomes, close achievement gaps for children in poverty, and boost literacy within the Learning Community achievement plan. However, if one scans the Learning Community website, there is no hard evidence of such accomplishments. The Learning Community expects continued generous portions of state taxpayer dollars directly from the state and through the Dept. of Education but continues to spend much of our tax money on non-education activities while academic achievement is not apparent. The LC hosts a diaper bank and subsidized expanded day care slots for families. Unemployment and job training assistance. Help with Medicaid enrollment. A counseling service provides mental health services for LC participants who qualify for Medicaid. The LC refers individuals to the Bridge Project, a cash transfer program for pregnant women. The North Omaha LC Center in 2025 worked with a nonprofit group that provides anti-poverty programs to poor families. It provided a car safety class for families. The LC provided families free tickets to attend the Outerspace Quest symphony, other Omaha symphony programs, and ballet tickets. The LC Parent University helps families pursue homeownership. Cooking demonstrations and classes for parents. Summer camps for families. Ice cream socials. Thanksgiving and Winter Wonderland family events. Childcare training and coaching for childcare providers, who receive weekday coaching and Saturday training classes. \$162,000 for a marketing partner. \$51,491 paid to a strategic plan facilitator. All staff underwent diversity, equity, and inclusion training.

Meanwhile, our last count showed LC 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade math proficiency stood at only 50.5%, reading at only 53%. Reading comprehension and math concepts all below the national average. Student school readiness skills lagged below the national average. Only 64% showed learning gain.<sup>1</sup>

It is patently obvious that the LC has morphed into a welfare agency, providing parents, including illegal aliens, with a host of alternatives to obtain welfare services. Meanwhile, the LC continually fails to provide hard evidence that its students from poor and minority backgrounds are achieving a level of education that is commensurate with their peers in the area public schools. In its lengthy existence, the LC has failed miserably to reach its stated goal of significantly improving education for its youngsters. Therefore, we ask this board in future to withhold taxpayer dollars from the Learning Community until it can show definitive evidence that it is boosting the academic achievement for its children coming from lower and poverty-stricken socio-economic backgrounds.

Thank you.



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<sup>1</sup>2024-2025 LC Evaluation Report.