

**Nova Classical Academy  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
Regular Meeting  
January 11, 2005, 6:30 p.m.**

**Directors present:** Lisa Knudson, Simon Fung, Margaret Ryther, Evon Spangler, Maria Marchand, Tom Blindt, Jennifer Strautman, Ted Olsen

**Advisory Members present:** Dick Nunneley, School Director, Jane Marie Phillips, PTO President

**Others in attendance:** Bob Hobyan, School Accountant, Mary Hess, Sandi Horn of Bethel University, and many Nova teachers and parents

**Recording secretary:** Jeanie Anderson

The meeting was called to order at 6:39 p.m.

**Announcements**

Evon Spangler, new board member, was introduced.

**Approval of Agenda**

Margaret Ryther added a proposal from Andrew Kern for consideration.

**Consent Agenda**

\*Tom Blindt moved to approve the meeting minutes from the November 9, 2004 Board of Directors meeting.

Maria Marchand seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

\*Tom Blindt moved to approve the meeting minutes from the December 14, 2004 Board of Directors meeting.

Maria Marchand seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Public Comment**

**Paul Sterzinger's** comments: "What are the Board's plans for Dr. Nunneley. Why is his employment agreement taking so long? I'm concerned that the Curriculum Committee lacks being centered around subject matter experts; we need more teacher subcommittee heads. Also, regarding open elections; what is the stance of the Nominating Committee?"

**Tom Peterson's** comments: "Thanks to the Board, Dr. Nunneley and Julie Kalnin for establishing curriculum. What is the Board's response to Julie Kalnin's resignation?"

**John Andrastek's** comments: "Are you intending to answer questions? Do I have assurance that I will get answers? I am done with the dragging out of issues."

**Lisabeth Renken's** comments are lengthy and are attached.

**Pat Mathew's** comments: "I have been hearing a lot of stuff about Dr. Kalnin quitting. People will come and go and we have to get over it. What I'd like to say is that Dr. Kalnin is moving on. What if Dick leaves? What if the teachers leave? These are

personality issues. We have to have a plan to move forward. We need to be bigger than all of this backbiting. We should be coming together.”

**Bryan Koch’s** comments: We have had the resignation of two world class educators. I am resigned to the Board of Directors being “large and in charge.” The board does not believe it has a problem. It makes me sad.”

**Tina Armstrong’s** comments: “I’m sad too. I’m sad that as a community of parents we have regressed to the negativity of this. This school has to be bigger than anyone in it. We need to look beyond this and look at the big picture. The drama is overplayed. We need to button up and move on and figure out the next step.”

**Greta Wenzel’s** comments were lengthy, written copy has been requested.

**Marna Canterbury’s** comments: “We were in this same place last spring, with parents fighting about whose side you’re on. How open is the board? Do you reach out to those who don’t agree? Please consider it. People with different ideologies need to come together.”

**Lynne Friedman’s** comments: “I would like to think we can work as a team. We need to come together and make sure our kids get a really good education.”

**Pete Palmer’s** comments: “I’ve been part of the Nova process form very early on. I followed the search for director. Now, I see nothing but successes. I have three children here and it has been a wonderful experience for them. The governance issues are technical. The board has to be in compliance with state statutes.” Pete also explained the way governance works.

**Joan Mellor’s** comments: “I have been with Nova since 2001. It has been a privilege working with all of the board members. This school saved my children. I left the board in 2003. This is breaking my heart, we have to figure this out. If our two administrators leave then who is coming in? We cannot let this happen.”

**Julie Kalnin’s** comment: “I need to clarify Greta Wenzel’s comments: I sent only one letter to the board, and multiple letters to the sponsor, Bethel University.”

### **Treasurer’s Report**

See attached report.

Fund balance as of 12/31/04 was \$324,362.

### **Director’s Report**

See attached report.

**Audit** - Dr. Nunneley reported that the audit has arrived (was distributed to all board members at the start of the meeting). The audit cost Nova \$5,000.

**Designs for Learning** – We now have an account with Designs for Learning for technical support. Jeanie Anderson, Dick Nunneley, Chris Rovn and Bill Oyler (Designs for Learning representative) will meet next week to make changes to the website.

**Federal Charter School Grant** – The grant money will come in on Wednesday, Jan. 12 or Thurs., Jan. 13. This money, 40% of grant amount, will be uploaded to our account.

**Latin Instructor** – Courtney Holman has been hired as our Latin instructor. Her employment contract was made full time by filling out with Education Assistant responsibilities so that she may qualify for benefits. She will start on Tues., January 18.

\*Tom Blindt moved to approve Courtney A. Holman's contract.  
Jennifer Strautman seconded the motion.  
The motion passed unanimously.

**Iowa Tests** – Baseline Iowa tests will take place January 25 through February 4.  
Summary assessments will take place in late May, 2005.

### **PTO Report**

See attached report.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Facility Committee**

Tom Blindt reported that there was discussion with Highland Catholic Community in December with our contact there. HCC wants a lot of information from us before they will approve a long-term contract. We cannot compile all of this information in a few weeks, we would need 4-6 months to do so. Therefore, we have requested a short term contract; a 1-2 year extension to give us time to put forward a proposal for the HCC Facilities Committee.

- Margaret Ryther asked if the sanctuary would be de-sanctified.
- Tom Blindt said that is in discussion now. If we end up with a two year commitment, we will start building out this summer.
- Margaret Ryther asked if, in terms of growth, is there enough space secured for next year?
- Tom Blindt said that we have the short term lease on order to work on the long term lease.
- Lisa Knudson stated that we will work on amending the lease to include the sanctuary.

#### **Curriculum Committee**

Before I begin, I would like to make it known that I was the one who contacted Julie (by e-mail) and asked to meet with her. As co-chair of the Curriculum Committee, I wanted to discuss her concerns and talk about the Curriculum Committee. I wanted to meet with her privately because I thought it was a very sensitive issue that might be best discussed that way. She declined to meet with me. I didn't think my offer was unethical then and I don't think it was unethical now.

I admit there is not enough information going out, so I'd like to give you some background. When I was asked to join the board, I was also asked to join the Curriculum Committee. This is a new thing we are doing. We were grappling with how to make it work and trying to move forward.

In light of recent developments, the board has asked me, as co-chair of the Curriculum Committee, to give them, and everyone here, a brief update of how things are going with the Curriculum Committee.

This will be an informal statement based on my understanding of things since I came on the board.

When I was asked to join the board earlier this year, I was also asked to join the Curriculum Committee as co-chair. I was also asked to head up the Policy and Networking Subcommittee. Needless to say, I was learning as I went, as was the rest of the committee.

Our first fall Curriculum Committee meeting was held on September 23, 2004. The second meeting was held on October 28<sup>th</sup>. The primary purpose of those meetings was to solicit and appoint volunteers to the committee and to subcommittees. It was a difficult task considering the number of parents and teachers who volunteered.

After reviewing all of the volunteers, along with the need to create a well-balanced committee, we succeeded in that task. Although the committee is rather large (one could almost say too large), that was the result of trying to be inclusive. I believe we have a wide variety of members on our committee, who will be able to contribute a wide variety of ideas from many perspectives.

One of the first problems we discovered was that it looked a little like we were putting the cart before the horse. So Margaret Ryther and I, as co-chairs, realized we needed to re-think the approach the subcommittees needed to take to policy development.

I'll explain:

The problem, which became apparent after the first two meetings, was that we were going into it thinking that everyone would be involved in drafting the Curriculum Review Policy. For coherency sake, we realized that that would not be a workable approach.

What we felt we needed was one subcommittee that would draft that Policy – have that Policy itself reviewed by the whole committee and then have it approved by the board. Then, the various subcommittees would set about their work reviewing curriculum, using the Curriculum Review Policy as a guide. This in a nutshell, is what we communicated to everyone in the November issue of “The Board Report.”

Another problem was the impression we gave everyone at the Curriculum Committee meetings. Unfortunately and understandably most everyone there probably left with the impression that they would be drafting, or partially drafting, the Curriculum Review Policy. That was my understanding at first too. But, although all committee members will play a role in reviewing and modifying (or rejecting) that Policy, they won't all have a role in actually drafting it.

Our hope was that the November announcement would help to clarify things. I have talked to a number of parents privately as well.

Since that time, however, we have admittedly gotten bogged down in some areas. The holidays also made it difficult to get started again.

We do still plan on having a January meeting. We would like to hold that meeting here on January 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

Although we won't be able to present a Curriculum Review document for review at that meeting, we do have another, related and exciting development that we would like to present to the committee at that meeting.

A while ago, I'm not sure exactly how long ago, a month or two, a parent suggested that we contact Andrew Kern, the author of the book, Classical Education in America: The Movement Sweeping America.

So we did. A very brief outline of his proposal has been given to the board to see. It is not an actual proposal though. That will be for my subcommittee, along with the entire committee to review and submit to the board.

As I said, this will still need to go through the Curriculum Committee (so I don't have a lot of details), but, with the information we have now, this looks like a very exciting opportunity for us – to be able to call on the experience and expertise of someone who is so well respected in the Classical Education Community. (If you haven't read his book yet, I would recommend it highly.)

He may be able to be instrumental in helping us draft our Curriculum Review Policy. He can also provide training in a number of areas.

Nova is a pioneer charter school in using the Trivium approach to Classical Education. Other schools are using core knowledge and even Paideia with almost prepackaged curricula. We are pretty much developing ours from scratch, with certain models to follow, which, all agree, need to be modified for a public school.

In the meantime, I invite Curriculum Committee members to contact me via email if they have any questions regarding the curriculum committee work. I may not always have the answers. And I may not be able to get back to you right away (with work and family), but I will try to get back fairly quickly.

- Margaret Ryther stated that we want teachers input as to what works.
- Dick Nunneley stated that as of January 11, this is the first I have heard of Andrew Kern. DN said that it was an excellent idea, but wanted to know when Mr. Kern was first contacted?
- Margaret Ryther stated that a formal proposal was received January 11, 2005, at 3:00 p.m. and was immediately emailed to board members. "We were struggling with developing policy. We felt we didn't need to reinvent the wheel. We needed to find someone to help us, especially as we move toward developing a high school."

- Dick Nunneley asked if in retrospect, the curriculum committee should've apprised Julie Kalnin of the possibility of soliciting a proposal from Andrew Kern.

-Margaret Ryther said that at that point there had been a breakdown in trust in the working relationship and felt that a discussion regarding this matter would not have been useful or productive.

- Simon Fung explained that normally proposals are brought forward once a proposal has been received, not when it is in the formulation stages.

- Margaret Ryther stated that as the proposal was received at 3:00 on January 11, 2005, the proposal was brought forwarded as soon as possible after it was received.

- Ted Olsen said that the Curriculum Committee had contacted a couple of other schools to see how they developed curriculum policy, but that it was not very fruitful.

- Margaret Ryther stated that the Curriculum Committee was given samples of how other schools have done this. However, their examples are not specific enough for curriculum review. The classical school in Colorado has a core knowledge curriculum. Andrew Kern has developed 21 principles of defining classical curriculum. When the committee started working on policy, we needed a filter through which to go through curriculum selection. We needed a way to determine if these are really classical things we are doing.

-Tom Blindt expressed reservations, asking if Mr. Kern could remove sacred elements, being that Nova is a public, secular school?

-Ted Olsen said that Mr. Kern is very aware of the fact that Nova is a public, secular school. He is confident he can offer a secular model.

-Margaret Ryther said that maybe Mr. Kern should write a proposal of how he would do training leaving out sacred parts.

-Simon Fung stated that Mr. Kern would be teaching process versus policy.

-Chris Rovn stated that it would be good for teachers, too, to hear his presentation.

\*Ted Olsen made a motion to approve Andrew Kern's proposal to provide board training on February 11 & 12, 2005.

Simon Fung seconded the motion.

Voting for the motion: Lisa Knudson, Simon Fung, Margaret Ryther, Evon Spangler, Tom Blindt, Jennifer Strautman and Ted Olsen.

Voting against: Maria Marchand

### **PR/Marketing**

Jennifer Strautman reported that Cindy Bielke of CAB Communications had publicized the first information meeting which is scheduled for Thursday, January 13. Notices had been placed in various metro publications. Cindy also placed a posting in the metro school guide which will be published Sunday, January 16. Jennifer stated that Jeanie Anderson organized the meetings and staffed with volunteers. Dr. Nunneley was asked if he would be speaking at the meeting and specifically if he would be talking about curriculum since Dr. Kalnin would not be present at the meeting. Dr. Nunneley agreed that he would talk about curriculum. It was also decided that two of the teachers who were scheduled to attend the meeting, Crista Murphy and Megan Daoust would be asked to speak.

### **Finance Committee**

See attached report.

Simon Fung reported that money was expensed out of Implementation Year 1. Money was moved into general administrative support category for supplies and materials. He stated that the committee would send out another copy of the report with modifications for review.

### **Nominating Committee**

See attached report.

Mary Hess stated that the Nominating Committee had interviewed two candidates, Dr. Jerry Reedy, and Mr. Jim Day. The committee was bringing forward the nomination of Jim Day for the board to vote upon.

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\*Margaret Ryther moved that the board approve Jim Day as a board member for Nova Classical Academy.

Tom Blindt seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

### **Bylaw Changes**

The Bylaws that were up for approval are those that were presented at the December 2004 board meeting and were made available to the public in December.

Lisa Knudson stated that she and Louise Wilson, sponsor liaison, had a conversation in which they determined that it was necessary to add one more teacher to the Board in May 2005. Lisa met with teacher, Regina Zelinka regarding this issue (Gina is a member of the Policy and Governance Committees). Ms. Zelinka will look into how other schools go about determining which teacher will be seated on the board.

Lisa Knudson also stated that changes to the bylaws are based upon the mediation agreement, and upon an annual review of the bylaws as stipulated in the bylaws.

\*Tom Blindt moved to approve the bylaw changes (dated 10/04/04).

Jennifer Strautman seconded the motion.

Voting for the motion: Lisa Knudson, Simon Fung, Margaret Ryther, Maria Marchand, Tom Blindt, Jennifer Strautman and Ted Olsen.

Abstaining from voting: Evon Spangler

### **Personnel**

Lisa Knudson reported that she had met with two prospective project managers to find someone to help build a high school. She reported that Steve Bosacker is in the process of putting together a proposal for the board. She stated that the board welcomes any recommendations. She hopes to have a proposal from Mr. Bosacker to vote on at the February board meeting.

### **Communication Issues**

Lisa Knudson stated that she wished to address communication problems.

- Margaret Ryther stated that there is a need to set protocol. Especially as we bring on new board members, it needs to be determined how do we go about board members talking for themselves or representing the board.

- Jane Marie Phillips stated that specifically, we need to address not just a response, but an answer. We need to find a way to make a policy so that people don't feel they are being excluded.
- Evon Spangler observed that communication is severely lacking between the board and parents/community. She stated, "What are the roles? I believe that the board should review minutes and get back to the community with responses to their questions. The community needs to realize there are things that are going to come up. Probably the board has not always responded because there are not policies in place. We have to fulfill our fiduciary obligation."
- Jennifer Strautman asserted that the question ought to be answered in the same forum that it is offered. Put on the agenda an answer section in the same forum. The board should continue to take inquiries through the Yahoo box. We want to see common issues.
- Evon Spangler stated that the board needs to make sure if it promises to get back to every single individual that we can actually do it. If everyone asks questions is it realistic we can get back to everyone? Evon proposed that the board appoint a subcommittee to look into this further. She further stated that she would be happy to sit on this committee, and the Bylaws, p. 11, paragraph 3 allows the board to create an ad hoc committee.
- Tom Blindt said that as board members you get questions. He asked if he could answer questions as an individual, or as a committee chair, or as a committee member, or as a board member.
- Evon Spangler asserted that the issue needs to be further discussed.

### **Policy Development**

Brian Mak of the Policy Subcommittee stated that he had received comments from parents regarding two of the policies that would be voted on at today's meeting.

**RE: FLMA policy** – Tina Armstrong had inquired if Nova was guaranteeing unpaid leave for employees. Brian Mak responded that because of Nova's small size, we were not required to adhere to FLMA policy.

**RE: Pledge of Allegiance** – Brian brought forward a petition from Lynn Friedman, and signed by 28 parents that requested that the Pledge of Allegiance be said daily.

- Simon Fung asked if the survey should be made available to a wider audience?
- Brian Mak asked if the proposal should be approved as it is and left up to the director to decide if the Pledge of Allegiance should be said more than once per week.
- Evon Spangler encouraged the board to pass the policy with the minimum requirements tonight. Then we could have further discussion/survey in the future.
- Lisa Knudson encouraged the board to pass the minimum tonight. She addressed Dick Nunneley and stated that the policy gives him discretion. She asked if he wanted to survey the parents.
- Dick Nunneley stated that he did want to survey the parents because transparency is a great solvent. He wants to ask the community what they think.

\*Evon Spangler moved that the Board approve the Pledge of Allegiance Policy as drafted by the Policy Committee.



Maria Marchand seconded the motion.

Discussion: Ted Olsen asked Dick Nunneley, "Will the survey be made?"

Dick Nunneley replied, "The request has been made of me and I said yes."

The motion passed unanimously.

Brian Mak brought forward the following additional policies:

**Disability Nondiscrimination Policy** – Required policy. It is unchanged from the original proposal, unchanged from MSBA 402. Brian Mak recommends that we strike references.

-Evon Spangler stated that Minnesota law references were not listed. It would be best to strike references. Otherwise we'd be obligated to research all federal laws which would take a great deal of time.

**Employee Right to Know, Hazardous Substances** – Required policy.

**Equal Education Opportunity**– Required policy, unchanged.

**Equal Employment Opportunity** – Required policy, no changes from model policy language.

**Family Medical Leave Act** – Brian Mak recommended leaving as discretionary.

**Public and Private Personnel Data** – Required policy. The language is taken from the model language, and is unchanged.

Discussion:

- Evon Spangler expressed concern over the Family Medical Leave Act, stating that it provides too much room for litigation. The language is too broad. She proposed that we wait on it.

-Brian Mak stated that FLMA will be held until next meeting, and addressed at that time.

\*Evon Spangler moved that the Board adopt the policies presented by the policy chair with the exception of the Family Medical Leave Act.

Margaret Ryther seconded the motion.

Discussion: Margaret Ryther raised a question about the Public and Private Personnel Data. Evon Spangler affirmed Margaret's reservations and so amended the motion:

\*Evon Spangler amended the motion to also exclude the Public and Private Personnel Data Policy so that the committee has time to look it over.

The motion passed unanimously.

Brian Mak stated that future meetings of the Policy Committee will take place at 7:30 a.m., the first Saturday of each month.

Jennifer Strautman reported to the full Board, after stating that she had discussed the matter with Lisa Knudson earlier in the week, that she must take an indefinite medical leave of absence to tend to health matters and her family at this time. She expressed

willingness to continue consulting and assisting with projects (the newsletter, specifically) as needed.

At 9:40 p.m. the board meeting moved into closed session to consult with their attorney, invoking attorney/client privilege.

After the closed session, the meeting opened up at 10:00 p.m.  
The meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Jeanie Anderson, recording secretary.