

**Nova Classical Academy
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting
December 15, 2005**

Directors Present: Lisa Knudson, Maria Marchand, Ted Olsen, Tom Blindt, Chad Long, Megan Daoust, Simon Fung (arrived at 6:50 p.m.), Joe Michalak (arrived at 7:50 p.m.)

Directors Absent: Rick Stempkowski, Jim Day

Advisors Present: John Greving, Louise Wilson, Jane Marie Phillips

Recording Secretaries: Maria Marchand, Jeanie Anderson

- I. Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m.
- II. Announcements
 - A. Board chair would like committee chairs to submit strategic plans (draft charge, draft policies), and timeline to be put into one document. These things must be given to John Greving by January 15, 2006 to be compiled, for approval by the board.
 - B. Board chair wants board to receive the full curriculum committee report (it was edited in the newsletter). The full report will be sent home with the next edition of Nova News.
- III. Approval of agenda
**Tom Blindt moved to approve the agenda with revisions as noted:
-Move the curriculum policies to after reports.
-Add PTO under reports
*The motion was seconded by Ted Olsen
~The motion passed unanimously.
- IV. Approval of Minutes
**Tom Blindt moved to approve the November 21, 2005 Board of Directors regular meeting minutes.
*Ted Olsen seconded the motion.
Voting for: Knudson, Olsen, Blindt, Long, Daoust, Fung
Abstained: Marchand
~The motion passed.

**Tom Blindt moved to approve the November 28, 2005 Board of Directors special meeting minutes.
*Megan Daoust seconded the motion.
~The motion passed unanimously.
- V. Treasurer's Report
The audit was supposed to have been emailed to Board Chair. Ms. Knudson had not yet received it. Upon receipt, copies will be made and sent to the board.

An amended budget will be available at the January meeting.
 - The amended budget is necessary mainly because of busing.
 - John Greving and Lisa Knudson will meet with the Department of Education to discuss this further.

Outstanding issues:

- John Greving wants to get projected maintenance costs from Lumen Christi Catholic Church.
- In the previous lease, Nova was responsible for fees incurred for an assessment, in the current lease Nova is not responsible for these fees. LCC expected Nova to pay for said fees. John Greving pointed out that this is not in our current lease. There will be further conversation about it.
- An additional issue is the cost of snow removal and lawn care.

VI. Director's Report

A. School Operations Committee has been formed.

This committee reports to the board and is chaired by the Head of School. Representatives will eventually include faculty members from each part of the Trivium (1 from K-4, 1 from 5-8, and 1 from 9-12). It will include faculty members who work with multiple grade levels. Current members are: Chris Rohn, Gina Zelinka, Cassidy Steiner, Brandon Foat and Jen Follstad. The first issue to be addressed is that there is no Faculty/Staff handbook in place. This will be put together. John Greving asked if the handbook could be brought to the board segments at a time. Board Chair confirmed that the information can be brought in pieces, but encouraged Mr. Greving not to start from scratch as Mr. Kreischer had done some work on the handbook.

B. Mr. Greving presented a request to hire someone in the capacity of Curriculum specialist.

- Ina Loobeek was hired this fall as a Curriculum Consultant, and has done a tremendous job. She has helped with curriculum mapping, adoption of textbooks, choosing literature, and creating a 9-12 model. She is very thorough and knowledgeable. Mr. Greving requests of the board permission to offer her a contract as Curriculum Specialist for the period of 12/01/05 – 11/30/06. Funds to finance this position will come from either the annual operating budget or the Walton grant. The position description is done.
- The board asked Mr. Greving about Ms. Loobeek's qualifications, how the salary to be offered to her was determined, and how this will fit into the budget. Mr. Greving gave her qualifications and explained how he arrived at the salary (he took the highest faculty salary, determined the amount that person is paid per day, and would like to offer Ms. Loobeek the same "per day" amount. She would end up receiving more wages because she would work August 1 – June 30.

C. Enrollment Update

Since the last board meeting, 4 students withdrew and 2 were added. Enrollment currently stands at 263.

D. Information Meetings

Postcards advertising our information meetings were mailed to 2,500 households who have children ages 2 – 15. At the information meeting on December 13, visitors were asked how they heard about the school. 41 families attended the meeting, 22 from St. Paul, 7 from Minneapolis. 28 had heard about the school from friends, 3 from the post card mailing, and 2 from the website. 5 attendees were interested in the high school, and the remainder in K-8.

-The board asked if we were making a sustained effort to get Nova's name in area papers. It was suggested that the school submit bi-monthly updates to newspapers (the education section of the Pioneer Press, Star Tribune, and the Highland Villager). Mr. Greving reported that no person is currently assigned to give regular press releases, but that the school will set up an internal process to take care of that.

- E. Mr. Greving thanked the parent community for putting together the cubby lockers in the upstairs hallway.

VII. Sponsor Report – None

VIII. Reports

A. Waiver Update

-The Board Chair offered to entertain questions about the waiver packet. She stated that, for the record, a more current copy of the Principles Document (dated May 05) needs to be included in the packet. She explained that there was a revised waiver request form since the board had its November 28 special meeting. The new form was originally dated Fall 2005. Upon further inquiry to the DOE, it was discovered that the form had been revised two days after Nova's special meeting on November 28.

The Board used the document dated 2/05 (the most recent form from the DOE when Nova began the waiver process) to put together its waiver request documentation at its Special Meeting on November 28. The 12/05 version was created by the DOE after a Nova parent, not a board designee, called the Department of Education inquiring about the language on the 2/05 Waiver Request Form. It appears that, as a result of that communication, the state changed the waiver request form. This action precipitated a letter from the Board Chair to employees at the DOE stating that all official communication to Nova Classical Academy should be directed to the Board Chair, the Head of School or a board designee.

Subsequently, Lisa Knudson, John Greving and the school attorney, Sarah Duniway, met with Morgan Brown and expressed concern about the impropriety of what transpired. Mr. Brown acknowledged that no substantive changes should have been made on the form by the DOE. He further clarified issues that the Board had questions about.

Board members and the Head of School discussed how to continue to communicate to the school community regarding a set of "best practices". That is, when the Board has business to accomplish the school community ought to stay within established best practices in order to ensure that the board can focus on its work. In addition, the Board requested that the Communications Committee include an outline of best practices in their communications policy for the school.

B. PTO Report

The PTO will implement a new governance structure, as set forth in their new bylaws. They approved their budget which includes proceeds from the silent auction and the Barnes and Noble book fair. PTO President, Jane Marie Phillips, presented a check for \$10,000, plus the credit card

proceeds of \$4,396.79 to Nova Classical Academy. Mr. Greving thanked the PTO for the generous donation.

IX. Action Items

A. Curriculum policies

Early Kindergarten Admission Policy – Tina Armstrong expressed concern that a Nova parent presented a copy of our draft policy to the Minnesota Department of Education for feedback rather than work through proper channels. The Board Chair stated that the appropriate place to turn to for legal advice regarding draft policies was our non-profit lawyer, not the Dept. of Ed. The Dept. of Ed. sent a letter to our sponsor liaison, Louise Wilson, regarding the draft policy expressing concern about the testing of students being a requirement for early admission. Tina Armstrong explained that the committee researched other school districts before writing this policy, and found that other districts do test for intelligence when considering early kindergarten admission. The intent is to ensure that a truly exceptional child, as determined by psychological and intelligence testing, would have the opportunity to apply for early admission. If deemed appropriate, this child's application would then be allowed to go through the admissions lottery.

**Tom Blindt moved to approve the 12/06/05 version of the early admission to kindergarten guidelines subject to legal review.

*Ted Olsen seconded the motion.

Voting for: Knudson, Olsen, Fung, Blindt, Daoust.

Abstaining: Marchand, Long

~The motion carries.

**Megan Daoust moved to approve the 11/14/05 version of the Nova Classical Academy whole grade acceleration policy.

*Tom Blindt seconded the motion.

Voting for: Knudson, Fung, Blindt, Daoust, Long, Marchand

Abstaining: Olsen

~The motion carries.

X. New Business

06-07 Kindergarten: Mr. Greving expressed concern that there will not be the opportunity for many new families to enter Nova next year because of the high number of kindergarten siblings (30). He believes this will ultimately affect our enrollment in the upper grades. He would like the board to engage in long-term planning regarding kindergarten. He would also like to see staff preference, which current charter school law does not allow.

XI. Public Comment

Steve Silverman pointed out that a conditional offer should be made to Ms. Loobeek, for the Curriculum Specialist position unless it is known for certain the money is there (through the Walton grant or if already in the current budget).

XII. Adjournment

**Ted Olsen moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

*Megan Daoust seconded the motion.

~The motion passed unanimously.

