

Board Q & As

Questions/Comments are from the July 18, 2005 Board Meeting

Q1. Board members should allow clarifying questions during meetings, or commit to presenting all reports in written form available to all (ex: director, curriculum reports). Submitted by Bryan Koch

A1. As the Board stated at its February board meeting (need to confirm date), the Board is committed to being the official source of information in an efficient and timely manner. This includes providing all relevant information at Board meetings and having written copies available for members of the public.

Q2. Minutes approved today refer to attachments that are not present. Please include attachments in public copies of documents presented. Submitted by Bryan Koch

A2. We will include one copy of attachments for the public at each meeting (as attachments are sometimes over 100 pages).

Q3. Bylaws refer to PTO, yet the PTO appears to have died through lack of interest. Suggest formally disbanding of former group, reconstitute this fall. Submitted by Bryan Koch

A3. Although the PTO is created by and functions under the authority of the board, the board does not exercise any control over the PTO; it is just trying to work with the parent/teacher organization. Unless the PTO is doing something that deviates from the school's mission, the board allows the PTO to function as its own entity and is supportive of the organization.

Q4. Board approved strategic planning session for July 13. Why wasn't this session announced to, and open to, the Nova community? Who attended? Submitted by Bryan Koch

A4. It is the board's understanding that a training session was not a meeting under the Open Meeting Law because no decisions were being made or information being presented that would influence a future board decision.

Q5. Who is Father Keating, and what expertise does he bring to Nova as a public school? How much money was authorized to retain him? Submitted by Bryan Koch

A5. After receiving a high school education based on classical *paideia*, Michael Keating attempted a further liberal arts education by studying history, English, and philosophy at the University of Michigan. Still in pursuit of the liberal arts ideal, he also obtained an M.A. in Education from the University of Michigan wherein he studied the history and theory of education from Plato to the present. As a result of his work, he was asked by the School of Education to help them reformulate the core course requirements in history

and theory for all seven divisions in the School. Mr. Keating received a Ph.D. in modern intellectual history from the University of Notre Dame, and his final year of research was spent at Oxford where he studied the intense mid-19th century debates at Oxford (and, by extension, in the Anglo-American world) on the nature and purpose of education. In addition to the UK, Dr. Keating has lived and worked in Mexico, Belgium, Italy, and Germany. He speaks or reads at least a half dozen languages, and he has been involved in the education of youth and adults, formally or informally, for over twenty-five years. He was adjunct faculty in history and English at the University of Notre Dame for several years, as well as at the University of St. Thomas (here in St. Paul) for the past three years. After receiving a Master of Divinity degree and an M.A. in Theology from the Pontificia Università S. Tommaso (Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, commonly called the *Angelicum*) in Rome, Dr. Keating was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis in 2002. He has recently been appointed full-time associate professor at the University of St. Thomas (St. Paul) where he will continue teaching intellectual and cultural history.

After considering several options presented by parents and committee members, and having pursued two of those options, Board Chair Lisa Knudson, with the approval of the Director John Greving, asked Fr. Keating to do some training (on July 20-21) for the Board and for as many curriculum committee and high school advisory group members as were able to attend. The focus of the training was on understanding the ideal, character, method, and continuity of classical *paideia* through its Greek, Roman, medieval Christian, Renaissance, and Enlightenment manifestations, as well as how that *paideia* is distinguished from the approach to education that tends to prevail in the current public school forum. The emphasis of Fr. Keating's presentations was clearly on the need to understand the unique thing that *paideia* is, to grasp its non-sectarian (public) nature, and to understand the totality of what it means if anyone claims to be undertaking a truly *classical* education. Fr. Keating's approach was descriptive rather prescriptive, and the stimulating presentations and discussions have been extremely helpful for us as we continue to formulate what it is that Nova is to be (or not be) if we say we are a *classical* charter academy.

The cost of the training was \$750.

Q6. Request that board and committee minutes be published on Nova website as soon as available. Drafts also, clearly marked as unapproved drafts. Submitted by Bryan Koch

A6. Again, the Board is committed to being the official source of information in the most efficient and timely manner. The communication committee is working on a recommendation to the Board about how to best further accomplish that task

Q7. Consulting contract with Governance Group for Board Composition Waiver "push polling" is a waste of money that could be put to better use in classrooms. I request reconsideration of this contract. Submitted by Bryan Koch

A7. The adoption of the proposal with The Governance Group was a result of a meeting with the DOE, Bethel and the Nova community. It was on the agenda at two board meetings (June 14 and June 27) and the board voted unanimously in favor of Chris Porter's process and proposal. Statements, concerns, or questions regarding this should have been brought forward at those meetings.