

**Nova Classical Academy
Board of Directors Meeting
Regular Meeting
November 21, 2005**

Directors Present: Lisa Knudson, Simon Fung, Rick Stempkovski, Jim Day, Megan Daoust, Chad Long, Joe Michalak, Ted Olsen

Directors Absent: Maria Marchand, Tom Blindt

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

Recording Secretary: Jeanie Anderson

I. The Meeting was called to order at 6:38 p.m.

II. **Announcements**

- The Board Chair thanked the Silent Auction co-chairs, Carrie Lindgren and Shari Blindt, for the excellent job they did on the auction.

III. **Approval of Agenda**

- The PTO requested to put their action items with their report
- It was noted that the Curriculum Committee items are action items
- Algebra I curriculum was removed from Curriculum items

**Jim Day moved to approve the agenda as revised.

- Ted Olsen seconded the motion.
- The motion passed unanimously.

IV. **Consent Agenda**

**Jim Day moved to approve the consent agenda.

- Rick Stempkovski seconded the motion.
- The motion passed unanimously.

V. **Approval of Minutes**

**Simon Fung moved to approve the meeting minutes from October 17, 2005.

- Jim Day seconded the motion.

Discussion: Simon Fung pointed out that the budget is a snapshot of where the Budget is at one point in time.

- The motion passed unanimously.

**Rick Stempkovski moved to approve the amended minutes of the November 1, 2005 special board meeting.

- Megan Daoust seconded the motion.
- The motion passed unanimously.

VI. **Treasurer's Report** (attached)

The board questioned the Repairs and Maintenance category as \$16,940 has already been expensed, and the projected amount shows \$12,759. Director Day suggested that when projections are off of actual expenditures then we ought to change projected amounts to show actual incurred expenses (make this our default mode).

VII. **Director's Report**

- On October 21 the faculty had in-service training with Jerry Reedy, who gave a presentation on the classical model of education.
- The faculty is working on curriculum mapping which is due 10/22/05.
- Students in Grade 8 drafted a school constitution.
- Enrollment stands at 265.
- A letter went out to middle school parents on 11/9/05 which discussed the middle school schedule and program.
- The high school curriculum task force has been hard at work, and has an overview to present tonight.
- The federal grant has been completed and approved by the state.
- Transportation: John Greving and Lisa Knudson met with the SPPS interim superintendent regarding our transportation money. SPPS has said there is nothing they can do. The next step is to meet with Morgan Brown of the Department of Education.
- Mr. Greving thanked the Silent Auction Committee for their excellent work.
- Mr. Greving thanked Nova parents for helping their children prepare for the National Book Week presentations; and thanked Sue Peterson for taking photographs.

VIII. **Sponsor Report** – None.

IX. **School Climate**

Board Chair stated that the goal at Nova is to have staff, parents and students share in the mission, vision and goals of the school. She went on to say that any new organization has growing pains. It is our choice whether we allow the bumps to divide us or unite us. There has been a pattern of adversarial relationships in the school community; oppositional and adversarial. While disagreement is welcome, it must not continue to deteriorate into divisiveness. This blurs our goals and prevents unity of purpose. It is also a waste of energy. We must govern toward a vision. How do we do this without getting bogged down and taking sides? Help me to figure out how to achieve unity of purpose. I'd like your ideas in how to accomplish this.

Feedback from board members:

Megan Daoust: Megan stated that what John is doing is pushing us towards unity and clarity. He is helping to make clear what is going on in classrooms. Developing core values statement and doing more community building are important.

Simon Fung: Simon stated that Nova Core postings are discouraging. If people have ideas that are so different from what we are doing then that group should start their own school. We need to move on and put our differences behind us.

Joe Michalak: Joe stated that we are achieving a greater clarity and vision. He is not sure that we have unanimity on what we're about. Board members tend toward tunnel vision not out of malice or indifference, but by pressure of the work. We get into what our committee is doing and we lose communication. People feel things are assumed but they don't have enough information. What is Nova's vision? What is your vision? If we do not agree on the vision, perhaps one of us would be happier elsewhere.

Ted Olsen: Ted stated that there are core fundamentals about classical education that cannot be changed. Right now some think they can take what has been given to us by the founders

and if they don't like it, they try to change what was created. The attitude prevails that everything is negotiable; but it is not.

Jim Day: Jim stated that he had not had previous experience with anyone in the Nova community before becoming a board member. He was immediately put on Nova Core and found it to be vile. He had never experienced anything like it before. He questioned where all the negative energy comes from. Our legal obligation is to the charter: to provide a classical education. We have been entrusted to provide this service to the public. One way to improve climate would be to force people to take responsibility for the things they say or write. Questions should be signed and posted to the website; and answers should be posted on the website. The board needs to be responsive and get information out as soon as possible. Our website is the place to go for information .

Rick Stempkowski: The academy is a non-profit organization with an educational mission. This is a school of choice. All too often people sit down and write page after page of negative emails. If the gripe is not related to the mission then we can't take it up and take action on it. A preliminary phone call to a board member would take care of most issues before they become pages of frustrated emails.

Louise Wilson: Nova's mission is in the charter and filed with the State of Minnesota. The mission cannot be changed – the charter would be yanked. People need to consider the impact of an email message before it is sent.

John Greving: Our growing pains will continue because there is a lot of work yet ahead of us. When the adults gather it is often times adversarial. The faculty is stressed because of the large question, "What do we need to accomplish and how do we set about accomplishing it?" The principles of classical education are powerful. I concur that dimensions of them are non-negotiable.

Jane Marie Phillips: We must prioritize communicating and over-communicating to our community. We need to get the trust back. We must engage parents so they can get to know each other better. And we must keep moving in a progressive forward motion.

Actions that can help improve climate:

Jim Day: We must function at a policy level, and keep our motivation up. We must keep our eye on what we're trying to do.

John Greving: We need to engage in conversation prior to an issue surfacing.

Joe Michalak: In light of Jane Marie Phillip's suggestion, the Board should devote real time and someone's focus to examining how communication works, both formally (website, etc) and informally.

X. Action Items

Goals for head of School

**Megan Daoust moved to accept the Head of School goals for 2005-2006.

- Jim Day seconded the motion.

Discussion: Louise Wilson asked if the board would evaluate John based on these goals. It was affirmed that the board will use these goals in Mr. Greving's evaluation.

- The motion passed unanimously.

PTO Bylaws

- **Jim Day moved to approve the Nova Parent Teacher Organization Bylaws to become an organization under the umbrella of the Nova board.

- Megan Daoust seconded the motion.

Discussion: The board asked about possible dues and membership fees and was satisfied by the explanation of the "token" dues typically used by other school PTO's simply as a means of identifying voting membership. The board

also asked about Article 5, which allows the vice-president to move into the president position, but not necessarily so.

Voting for the motion: Long, Daoust, Fung, Knudson, Day.

Voting against: Stempkovski

Abstaining: Michalak

Community Meetings (report attached)

- Rick Stempkovski reported that Chris Porter's presentation was consistent with the charge that the board had given to her.

New Sponsor Update

- John Greving and Lisa Knudson had met with Friends of Ascension. Other potential sponsors are Crossroads College and St. Thomas University. Louise Wilson encourages any potential sponsor to call her.

High School Curriculum

- A parent meeting is scheduled for November 29, at which the proposed H.S. curriculum overview will be presented. A draft of the 9-12 curriculum design was reviewed with the board.

Curriculum

- Policies on Early Entrance and Grade Skipping are attached. Also, proposals on Spelling (gr. 3-8), Vocabulary (gr. 3-8), IPS (gr. 7) and Conceptual Physics (gr. 8) were submitted. These items will be voted on at the December board meeting.

Communications Charge

- The board requested that the wording of the charge be changed to reflect that Nova Classical Academy (not just the BOD) is committed to effective communication. The question was raised whether it is necessary to set a policy for each type of communication (e.g. yearbook, newspaper).

- The communications policy is up for approval at the December board meeting.

XIII. Public Comment

- No questions were submitted.

XIV. Adjournment

** Megan Daoust moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:56 p.m.

- Simon Fung seconded the motion.

- The motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by Jeanie Anderson, recording secretary.