

Executive Director's Report to the Board

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Strategic Plan Updates

Goal 9: Recruit, develop and retain a diverse highly skilled staff who exemplify the virtues of Nova Classical.

Objective 9.5: Nova Classical Academy will be an educational employer of choice: a school successful in attracting outstanding and diverse candidates who exemplify the school's values and are committed to the core components of the school's classical education model.

Strategy: Create a framework identifying the components included in being an employer of choice.

Stage: Completed

Update: This strategic plan objective aims to become an "employer of choice." While the term is commonly understood, our journey towards achieving this goal begins with a clear definition of the key components that make an employer of choice. Attached to the ED Report is a framework that identifies these components for Nova Classical. By developing this framework, we fulfill a crucial step in our strategic action plan. In the upcoming year, our focus will be on identifying the existing and ideal practices within each of these components.

Athletic Conference

I previously informed the Board about receiving an invitation to leave the Skyline Conference and join the Minnesota Classic Athletic Association (MCAA). I had previously shared with the Board that we would evaluate this opportunity and that if we had a recommendation to switch conference membership it would come this summer. We have decided not to bring such a recommendation to the Board and will plan to stay in the Skyline Conference. The biggest factor contributing to this is that the MCAA has not communicated a confirmed plan for their conference membership or divisional structure. Without this, we cannot determine the level of travel and scheduling that would impact our student-athletes. We do plan to indicate to the MCAA that should they get to a point where they could share with us plans for a divisional structure in the future that we may be open to reconsidering.

ERC

Nova Classical has received its payments for the Employee Retention Credit (ERC). This tax credit was designed to help organizations move through the pandemic without cutting positions. Nova Classical has now received all the expected employee retention credit payments, amounting to \$2,273,219, which is \$99,358 more than we initially anticipated. The additional amount is due to the interest paid to Nova Classical to account for the money during the application period.

SpEd Review Release of Findings

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the law that sets up special education programs. Under IDEA, each state must report on district compliance with IDEA. To accomplish this, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) collaborates with districts to conduct a self-review of a representative sample of student files every year. After the self-review, files are randomly chosen for each indicator to ensure the accuracy of state reporting.

We recently received notification that Nova Classical Academy's 2022-23 IDC record review, as reported by the district and verified by MDE, showed complete compliance with all relevant laws and regulations.

Facilities Update

As we approach the upcoming school year, our facilities team has been diligently working to restore the building to the condition that is expected for the beginning of the school year. The team is currently on schedule, and they have already completed the restoration of all first and third floor classrooms, except for those currently being utilized for summer child care purposes. Additionally, the gym is fully prepared for the start of the school year.

In the upcoming weeks, the team will be focusing on finishing up the restoration of second floor classrooms and common areas in the building. With their dedication and progress so far, we are confident that everything will be ready and in great shape for the students and staff when the new school year begins.

Staffing Update

I'd like to provide an update on our staffing for the upcoming 2023-2024 school year. Overall, we are pleased with the progress we've made and are ahead of our usual timeline for this time of the year. However, I'd like to highlight a couple of positions that are currently vacant.

Due to the departure of our former Upper School Counselor and the promotion of our Lower School Counselor, we are in need of two school counselors. Last week, our principals led the hiring team in conducting interviews, and we have extended offers to potential candidates for both positions. We are eagerly awaiting their responses and expect to know within the next 1-2 business days if they have accepted the offers. Additionally, we still have an open position for a math teacher, which became available due to the promotion of a staff member. Interviews for this role are scheduled for this week, and we are actively working to find the right candidate. Lastly, our study hall supervisor will be transitioning to a new position within Nova Classical, leaving the study hall position open. We are actively working on filling this position as well.

While we feel positive about where our staffing is at, it is not uncommon to have 1 or 2 resignations late in the summer. Our leadership team is taking proactive steps, such as posting some broad positions to build an applicant pool, to put us in a position to quickly fill any positions that may become vacant between now and the start of the school year.

Technology Update

Work is underway to implement two technology items which were budgeted for during last spring. First, in the 2023-2024 budget, we allocated \$52,800 for staff replacement devices, and I can share that the purchase and preparation of these devices have been successfully completed. As a result of this, Nova Classical has transitioned many of its instructional staff from desktop computers to laptops. Last year, approximately 12 instructional staff had school-issued laptops, but in the upcoming year, this number will increase significantly to 55.

Second, our budget allocated \$79,000 to replace the wireless access points in the building. The current access points were installed when the building was completed back in 2013, and due to their age, they can no longer receive service or updates. To enhance our technology infrastructure, we plan to replace these access points. The best-case scenario is that the new access points will arrive and be installed before the school year begins. However, it's important to note that due to shortages in the supply chain, there is a possibility that this work might occur later in the fall.

Equity Audit - Policy Review

As you are aware, we have engaged the Equity Literacy Institute (ELI) to conduct an equity audit for Nova Classical. This is directly aligned with Objective 6.1 of our strategic plan which says, "Nova Classical will evaluate the fairness of its policies, programs, and practices." As part of this audit, ELI has reviewed our policies and other written documents, including student handbooks. They have completed this step of the

audit and returned the document to us with their annotations and suggestions. The Governance Committee will have a debriefing session with ELI in September to discuss these recommendations. Furthermore, the recommendations made in the other documents will be considered during their regular timeline for review. Additionally, as outlined in the strategic action plan following the completion of the equity audit, we will establish an advisory group. This advisory group will be responsible for making recommendations based on the findings of the equity audit, including those related to these documents.

Leadership Committees

As we gear up to tackle the tasks outlined in our strategic plan, we are implementing changes to the structure of the committees that guide our school. During the last Board meeting, I mentioned that although there is a general sense of excitement among our leadership (and staff) regarding the strategic plan, there is also some uneasiness due to the adjustments being made. These adjustments involve transitioning from the familiar structure we have grown accustomed to, in order to better align with the objectives, you have assigned to us.

As a result of these changes, it's important to note that since the leadership team reconvened on July 10th, we have been operating under a different cadence and structure compared to our operations in June. This shift is designed to better align our efforts with the strategic plan and enhance our ability to achieve its goals. We understand that adapting to these changes may require an adjustment period for everyone involved. However, we firmly believe that this new committee structure will provide the necessary framework for effective execution and collaboration in work related to the strategic plan.