

Executive Director's Report to the Board

Date of the Report: August 24, 2026

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Staffing Update

At our last Board meeting, I shared that we were still working to fill a Special Education Teacher position and a Music Teacher position. Both positions have since been offered and formally accepted. As of right now, all of our licensed instructional positions are filled.

We continue to work through a handful of remaining non-teaching openings. There is often some movement in staffing at this time of year, but as of right now, we are cautiously optimistic about our ability to begin the year fully staffed.

Staff Development Week

Staff have returned, and preparations for the start of the school year are underway.

Last Thursday and Friday, Dr. Johnson and our Pedagogy Leads provided Classical Education Cohort training for new staff. For the first time, the training included not only teachers who are new to Nova, but also new paraprofessionals and educational assistants. This expansion provides all new instructional staff with a stronger shared foundation in Nova's classical educational model.

Our full staff returned this morning. The morning was reserved for staff to use based on their individual needs as they prepare for students to return. In the afternoon, I delivered an address centered on the theme, "When You Have a Strong Foundation, You Focus on Tweaks, Not Teardowns." I identified math achievement, retention of staff who are new to Nova, and virtue education as three areas where we should examine our current systemwide practices and determine whether targeted adjustments are needed.

The Pedagogy Leads then facilitated a reflective practice session in which staff identified specific tweaks they can make within their own professional practice during the coming year.

Charter Contract Renewal Application Timeline

The renewal contract with Friends of Education, our authorizer, has been mentioned at Board meetings over the past couple of months. I want to give you a broader picture of the work underway toward that application. We have built a workflow to ensure every required component of the application is completed and approved by the Board ahead of the October submission deadline. That workflow is included below.

As a part of the process, Nova must set academic goals as part of the renewal application. Complicating that requirement is the state's release schedule for 2026 assessment data. Because Minnesota administered a new version of the reading test this year, the school is working on drafting its academic goals before it has the full picture of its most recent assessment results. Math and science data are also embargoed but are released on an earlier timeline, so those goals can move on a normal schedule. Reading data will not reach us until mid-September and remains embargoed through September 30. Until that date, we cannot publicly discuss the data itself or say anything that would allow a reasonable person to draw conclusions about it and this includes in public Board and committee meetings.

This means our reading goals will be drafted and brought to the Board for approval before the underlying data is public. Staff will have the data internally in time to draft goals, but Board discussion and approval on September 28 will need to stay at the level of the goals themselves, not the data behind them. I will flag this distinction again as we get closer to that meeting.

Our planned workflow to complete the application is as follows:

Date	Owner	Item
August 6	Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)	Initial discussion of non-academic goals
September 1	Missy	Draft academic review (excluding reading)
September 1	Brett	Draft fiscal, operations, legal compliance, and governance reviews
September 8	Missy and Brett	Review exhibits being submitted
September 9	SLT	Draft math and science goals
September 11	Brett and Missy	Finalize all non-reading application documents
September 18	Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)	Releases reading data to the school
September 22	SLT	Draft reading goals
September 24	Academic Excellence Committee (AEC)	Review performance review and proposed goals (where allowable) - (this is a proposed ballpark date for meeting.
September 28	Board	Approve performance review and proposed goals
September 30	MDE	Public embargo on reading data lifted

Every item on this list is currently on schedule. I will bring the full application package, including the goals reviewed by AEC, to the September 28 meeting for Board approval.

