

# Governance Committee Report on 2024 Board Election

**Committee Name:** Governance

**Date of Report:** 10-5-2024

**Written/submitted by:** Becky Lund

For the 16<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, the Governance Committee provides this report to the Board under the authority of Nova Classical board policy NP 202. The purpose of this report is to provide a written summary of the last Nova Classical board election, with participation percentage and recommendations for increasing voter education and participation, as well as applicable dates/deadlines for the 2025 board election. As has become customary, this report also discusses additional issues and recommendations that may affect Nova Classical board elections.

## Executive Summary

This year there were two seats up for election. Three candidates ran for one Parent Seat and two candidates ran for one Teacher Seat.

During the nomination period, members of the Governance Committee solicited recommendations from the Nova community and Becky Lund, as Governance Committee chair, reached out to all people recommended.

The Governance Committee held a Candidate Forum in person and via Zoom on Tuesday, April 16, 2024. All candidates were at Nova Classical for the Forum, but several people watched the forum online. (More so than in the room, which was also an option.) The Forum was recorded and a YouTube link was shared via Nova Classical's election webpage. Although only anecdotal, candidates and members of the Nova Classical community commented again this year that they found the Forum to be helpful. At this time, the Governance Committee recommends continuing it as we did this past year with all candidates in the same place, but giving community members the opportunity to watch online or to watch a recording afterwards. Candidates were given the option to attend the Forum or to create their own video answering the questions presented at the Forum. All candidates attended the Forum; no one submitted a video.

The 2024 election itself proceeded smoothly with minimal issues. As always happens, a few people contacted "governance@novaclassical.org" to share that they had not received ballots. In all cases, the people were on the list of voters and were advised to check their spam folders and the ballot was resent. No additional issues were reported.

Voter participation percentage is as follows:

2024 = 37%

2023 = 34%

2022 = 28%

2021 = 38%

2020 = 31% (delayed election due to Covid-19)

2019 = 40% (only two teacher candidates on ballot and a shorter - 2 wks instead of 3 - voting window)

2018 = 31%

2017 = 38%

2016 = 54.2% (switched to electronic ballot/voting instead of paper)

2015 = 29%  
2014 = 35%  
2013 = 39%  
2012 = 52%  
2011 = 51%  
2010 = 42%  
2009 = 56%

The committee recommends continuing the existing practices of providing early reminders to the Nova community about the election process, updating and publishing written Election Guidelines, and communicating these items and any additional matters relevant to the board election process on a regular basis. We also recommend continuing to provide a Candidate Forum where candidates attend in person and community members may attend online or in-person. The Governance Committee will continue to discuss and investigate best practices for getting election information to all members of the Nova Classical community.

## **Discussion**

### **I) Recommended Dates & Deadlines for 2025 Board Election**

The date for the board meeting which also functions as the approval of the election results is Monday, May 19, 2025. Additional dates and deadlines will be provided in an online 2025 Election Timetable as the election approaches. A draft of the timetable is attached to this report.

The Governance Committee recommends continuing with a two-week voting period coupled with continuing to provide numerous reminders to vote during that period. Simply Voting allowed us to send reminders to everyone who had not yet voted.

### **II) Pre-Election Publicity and Documentation**

**A) Early Reminder Letter. Each January since 2010 an Early Reminder Letter and/or Brochure was distributed to the Nova Classical Community, detailing the seats up for election, the overall timetable for the election with deadlines where applicable, a summary of the qualifications sought for a Nova Classical board member, and suggestions for informing potential candidates about board service at Nova Classical. In 2014 and after, this brochure was sent via email to the Nova Classical community.**

The Governance Committee recommends distributing an early reminder flyer via email in January 2025, focusing on seeking recommendations for potential nominees that the Governance Committee can reach out to with more information. At the same time, the Governance Committee will reach out to the board committees to ask for possible recommendations for candidates.

**B) Call for Nominations Letter. This formal start to the annual election process is distributed to all Nova Classical parents, teachers, current BoD members and the public. Nova Classical's Bylaws require that this notice be sent at least 90 days before the Annual Meeting.**

The Governance Committee recommends publishing/distributing a similar letter in 2025, with updates/clarification as appropriate. Members of the Governance Committee will continue to contact members of board committees and other recommended leaders in the Nova community to encourage them to run or nominate someone else to run.

In addition to these pieces, the Governance Committee would like to have a parent information night (or video with similar information) regarding the work of the Board and to share ways that people could become more involved with board committees and work. This is part of the 2024-2025 Governance Committee goals to provide more training on the work of the Board to the Nova Classical community.

The Governance Committee noted that the Board continues to need people with legal and finance backgrounds and will make this a priority in communications regarding nominations.

### **C) Candidate Nomination Form**

For 2025, the Governance Committee recommends not having a form, but encouraging people to nominate others by emailing [governance@novaclassical.org](mailto:governance@novaclassical.org), which is what has been done over the past couple of years. The Chair of the Governance Committee will then reach out to the people nominated and share with them the steps they need to do to become a candidate and to double-check eligibility. Additionally, the Governance Committee will continue to be proactive in soliciting nominations through board committee members as well as doing outreach into the Nova Classical community for recommendations for nominations.

### **D) Candidate Questionnaire Form**

All candidate questionnaires were received by the due date. All questionnaire responses were posted on the Nova Classical web page in a Voter's Guide. Copies of the questionnaire responses were also included on the ballot with Simply Voting.

The Governance Committee recommends using a similar Google form in 2025, with updated questions reflecting the progress of the strategic plan, current board goals, and other needs of the Nova Classical Board of Directors. The Governance Committee also recommends again asking candidates to submit a current photo to include in the Voter Packet. This would not be required, but is very helpful in connecting faces and names.

### **III) Submission of Candidacy Timing**

The nomination period ran as usual this year. Candidates submitted nominations throughout the nominations period, though most came during the last five days. The Governance Committee will continue to set the deadline for candidate submissions a few days prior to the Governance Committee meeting at which candidate applications are reviewed. This provides time for members of the committee to review the applications and make sure they meet the guidelines set by state statute and the Governance Committee. The Governance Committee will continue to set clear and specific deadlines for all candidate information to be submitted for the candidate to be viable. Additionally, the chair of the Governance Committee will continue to respond to all nominations with a timeline, an invitation to attend the meeting, and any issues that may be obvious with the nomination (conflicts of interest, missing information, etc.)

### **IV) Candidate Choice of Category**

No concerns or actions at this time.

### **V) Additional Candidate Information**

The Governance Committee will continue to share an electronic copy of the Voter's Guide no later than the first day of voting to help get information to the voters; the information is also included on the Simply Voting ballot. We will also continue to research other methods of getting information to voters.

The Governance Committee will also continue to hold a Candidate Forum just before or at the beginning of the voting period.

## **VI) 2025 Nova Board Election Rules/Guidelines**

As it has done each year beginning in 2010, the Governance Committee recommends that an updated version be posted in several places on the Nova Classical website prior to and during the 2025 election. The Governance Committee also recommends that the committee continue to remind all board members, voting and nonvoting, that campaigning on behalf of specific candidates in board elections may jeopardize Nova Classical's tax-exempt status under IRS Section 501(c)(3).

Additionally, the rules have been updated to reflect changes in MN statutes such as the community member must reside in Minnesota and Teacher Seat candidates must work a minimum number of hours as a teacher to be eligible.

## **VII) Increasing Voter Participation**

The Governance Committee continues to discuss ways we can encourage more people to vote in the board elections.

## **VIII) Ballot/Vote Tallying**

The Governance Committee continues to find electronic voting to be much easier than paper ballots. The results were immediate and certified by Simply Voting. The Governance Committee recommends continuing to use Simply Voting for the 2025 election.

## **IX) Staggered Term Requirements**

Although the seats up for election are not currently equal each year (5/2/2 instead of 3/3/3), at this time the Governance Committee only recommends that the Community Member seat be for two years instead of three. [Note: Changes to MN statutes now prohibits a term for less than two years and our Bylaws still state that we want our standard term to be for three years.] The recommendation of the Governance Committee for the 2025 board election is:

- 2 Parent seats each for a 3-year term,
- 2 Teacher seats each for a 3-year term, and
- 1 Community Member seat for a 2-year term.

**Nova Classical Board Seats  
Staggered Term Status as of October 5, 2024**

**Terms Expiring June 30, 2025 (5)**

*Parents:* Colleen Hansen

Suzanne McInroy

*Teacher:* Becky Lund

Shannon Hooge

*Community Member:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Terms Expiring June 30, 2026 (2)**

*Parents:* Bavi Weston

Todd Sample

**Terms Expiring June 30, 2027 (2)**

*Parent:* Heather Meeker

*Teacher:* Chris Shepard

### Timetable for the 2024 Nova Classical Board Elections as of October 2024

Date Due	Event	Action Items Necessary	Person(s) Responsible
12/9/2024	Governance Committee Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review 2025 election flyer and update as needed</li> <li>• Remind Board members and Board committee members to begin reaching out to potential candidates</li> </ul>	GC
1/13/2025	Governance Committee Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make final changes to the election flyer</li> <li>• Approve and distribute the final copy via email</li> <li>• Assign election tasks to members of the committee including continued publicity such as outreach for recommended candidates and an education night regarding the work and needs of the Board</li> </ul>	GC
2/10/2025	Governance Committee Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Call for Nominations Letter</li> <li>• Review 2025 Election Rules/Guidelines</li> <li>• Review draft election web page format</li> <li>• Reach out to Nova Classical parents and Nova Classical faculty for recommendations for nominations</li> <li>• Arrange for posting and emailing of Call for Nominations.</li> <li>• Confirm to hire Simply Voting (or other company) to run Nova Classical's board election (electronic voting).</li> </ul>	GC
2/19/2025	Distribution of misc. notices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish/circulate Call for Nominations for 2025 board election</li> <li>• Publish election guide/rules</li> <li>• <b>Individually</b> contact people recommended to let them know and to see if they have any questions</li> </ul> <p><i>(Bylaws state that notification must happen at least 90 days before the board meeting on May 20, 2024; this is 98 days before the meeting.)</i></p>	GC Chair (Becky), GC members
3/1/2025	Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish nomination process and Candidate Questionnaire Form</li> <li>• Publish start of Nomination Period <b>and</b> include election dates and procedures [Note: MN statute requires that eligible voters be notified of election dates and voting procedures at least 30 calendar days before the election and that it be posted on the school's website.]</li> </ul>	GC Chair (Becky)
4/11/2025 at 4:00 PM	Close of Nominations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circulate all timely forms to the GC</li> </ul>	GC Chair (Becky)

<b>4/14/2025</b>	Governance Committee Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine eligibility &amp; candidate roster &amp; notify Board &amp; Nova Classical Community of candidates &amp; election details no later than <b>4/17/25</b> [Note: MN statute requires notification to happen at least 10 calendar days before the election begins.];</li> <li>Approve Voters Guide and share with the voting community along with voting information including to watch for a ballot link from Simply Voting (or other company). (Could be a separate email or included in the Nova News; information will also be posted on the Nova Classical Election webpage.</li> </ul>	GC
<b>Mid-April 2025</b>	Candidate Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule a Candidate Forum that could be attended in-person or online; record and post the Forum afterwards.</li> </ul>	GC
<b>4/28/2025</b>	2024 Voting window opens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simply Voting (or other company) sends ballot links to all eligible voters</li> <li>Begin to include reminders in Nova News and other emails on voting and what to do if information is not received or lost</li> </ul>	TBD
<b>5/12/2025</b>	<b>Voting window closes at 4PM</b> Governance Committee Meeting at 6:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare final report on election</li> <li>Provide notification to Board and to all candidates</li> </ul> <p><i>(Voting period is 14 days long.)</i></p>	GC
<b>5/19/2025</b>	May Board Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver election report to Board for approval</li> <li>Publish approved results to entire community</li> </ul>	GC Chair (Becky)