Nova Classical Academy
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting
September 29, 2025

Directors Present: Teo Flesher, Colleen Hansen (Zoom)**, Shannon Hooge** (Zoom)**, Becky Lund, Heather Meeker, Todd Sample, Chris Shepard** (Zoom)**, Bavi Weston, Lisa Wikman**

Directors Absent:

Advisors Present: Brett Wedlund, **Tamra Paschall, Carolyn Farrell**, **Missy Johnson, Kriscel Estrella, Joe Aliperto (Dieci Finance), Tomi Akinmusire** (student representative)

Others in Attendance: Nova staff, parents (Note: While this meeting was held in-person at 1455 Victoria Way, it was also made available on Zoom.)

I. **Call to Order**
The meeting was called to order at 5:59 pm. Bavi Weston chaired the meeting.

II. **Business Meeting: Approval of Agenda**
Ms. Wikman moved to approve the agenda. Ms. Meeker seconded. A roll call vote was held. Mr. Flesher, Ms. Hansen, Mr. Hooge, Ms. Lund, Ms. Meeker, Mr. Sample, Mr. Shepard, Ms. Weston, and Ms. Wikman voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

III. **Spotlight Award**
Anne Pass is the recipient of this month's Spotlight Award. She is an incredible example of positivity and community. Anne greets students by name as they enter the building, she cheers for everyone, willingly steps in to help with all kinds of activities like Multicultural Night, Playworks, and anything that needs doing during the school day. She models our virtues daily and transforms our community.

The Board recognizes Mrs. Pass' achievements and service to Nova Classical and congratulates her on receiving the Spotlight Award!

Chris Shepard arrived at 6:03 pm.

IV. **Student Representative Report**

Tomi spoke about Great Gatherings, Homecoming week, and National Merit Scholarship finalists and commended students.

V. **Board Training: Finance**

Joe Aliperto (Dieci Finance) walked the Board through the financial update and highlighted areas of strength and potential areas to keep an eye on. There was discussion about the fund balance and its importance in helping to finance our building project. Mr. Aliperto also spoke about the 10% state holdback, special education funding, and state funds that will be coming for various programs. He shared information about lease aid, which is based on 90% of lease cost or a weighted ADM, whichever is less. We're currently maximizing lease aid; money that is not spent each year goes into a capital improvement fund, which is currently over one million dollars and can only be used on capital (building) projects. There was discussion about the consistency in our net income over the past few years. Dr. Wedlund also highlighted that most years we do a budget revision closer to June, which may involve some additional spending if we have a surplus greater than anticipated. Mr. Sample added that this surplus is one of the levers we have in funding our building project; we will need to pay money above lease aid, so that money would be from the surplus. There was discussion about state funds.

VI. **Public Comment**

Lawrence Davidson (parent) submitted electronic public comment detailing the harassment and bullying of a student and the need for the Nova Classical administration and Board to do more to address and prevent it.
Siiri Davidson (parent) spoke about ongoing bullying and asked Nova Classical to re-examine past incidents to see what could have been done as well as look at its policies and anti-bullying curriculum to see how they can be improved to prevent situations like this in the future.

VII. **Consent Agenda**

A. September HR Report
B. 1st reading/ potential approval of yearly review policy 413 (Violence and Harassment)
C. 1st reading/ potential approval of yearly review policy 506 (Student Discipline)
D. 1st reading/ potential approval of yearly review policy 514 (Bullying Prohibition)
E. 1st reading/ potential approval of yearly review policy 524 (Internet Acceptable Use)
F. 1st reading/ potential approval of yearly review policy 526 (Hazing Prohbition)
G. August 18, 2025 Board Minutes

H. September 11, 2025 Board Minutes
I. September 19, 2025 Board Minutes
J. Add Ryan Miest to the Budget & Finance Committee

Ms. Meeker moved to approve the consent agenda. Ms. Wikman seconded. There was discussion. Mr. Flesher, Ms. Hansen, Mr. Hooge, Ms. Lund, Ms. Meeker, Mr. Sample, Mr. Shepard, Ms. Weston, and Ms. Wikman voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. <u>Reports received by the Board</u>

A. Executive Director Report

Dr. Wedlund highlighted that Nova Classical's ADM is currently 1021 students, 6 more than budgeted. As for our weighted ADM, we're currently at 1112 versus our budgeted 1104, which again is a good cushion to have at the beginning of the year.

B. Board Chair Report

Ms. Weston had no report.

C. Board Committees

a. Governance Report

There was no discussion.

b. Budget and Finance Report

Mr. Sample shared his excitement in adding Ryan Miese to Budget & Finance.

c. ED Review Committee

Shannon Hooge stepped out for this report.

Ms. Hansen, "Resolved, that the Board approves the ED Review Committee goals and the Academic Excellence Committee goals." Ms. Meeker seconded. Mr. Flesher, Ms. Hansen, Ms. Lund, Ms. Meeker, Mr. Sample, Mr. Shepard, Ms. Weston, and Ms. Wikman voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

d. Academic Excellence Report

There was no discussion.

D. NPTO Report

Ms. Meeker gave an update on the Great Gatherings Kick-Off, the upcoming NPTO meeting, the Barnes & Noble book fair, and the Carnival coming up on

November 8. They're always looking for volunteers to help with these events!

IX. Business

A. Charter School Assurances

Dr. Wedlund gave background information.

Mr. Sample, "Resolved, that the Board approves the 2025-2026 Charter School Assurances." Mr. Hooge seconded. Mr. Flesher, Ms. Hansen, Mr. Hooge, Ms. Lund, Ms. Meeker, Mr. Sample, Mr. Shepard, Ms. Weston, and Ms. Wikman voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Employer Sponsored Benefits

Ms. Estrella presented the current benefits for staff and what is proposed for 2026 after the HITA bidding process. She highlighted the bidding process and the recommendation moving forward, including increasing Nova Classical's contribution to health care by 2.74%. Dr. Wedlund gave additional historical background information. There was discussion about the increased cost to staff.

Ms. Meeker, "Resolved, that the Board approves the proposed benefits plan for staff.
Further resolved, that the Board approves the 2.74% increase in employer contributions for health care.
Further resolved, that the Board approves joining Minnesota state paid leave program." Mr. Sample seconded. Mr. Flesher, Ms. Hansen, Mr. Hooge, Ms. Lund, Ms. Meeker, Mr. Sample, Mr. Shepard, Ms. Weston, and Ms. Wikman voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

C. FoE Academic Goal Review – Part One

Dr. Johnson reviewed Goal 1, which based on data from the MCA test. It is 50% of our academic goals portion of our contract with Friends of Education. She highlighted some areas for celebration and areas for future growth. There are some gaps between where we are and where we'd like to be in meeting our goals. Nova Classical is addressing this by utilizing established and measured Tier 1 (classroom) interventions, instructional coaching, implementing Tier 2 and Tier 3 research-based interventions, rapid intervention following early and frequent screening, and parent education. There was discussion.

D. Expansion Update

Mr. Prins shared that we have all but one variance approved by the city of Saint Paul, including changing our zone from residential to institutional. The remaining variance is an air rights vacation for our skyway. They will be ready to submit it this week, but there is a 60+ day approval timeline. The financing team is advising that Nova Classical secure a loan before interest rates rise, so we are including plans to bond before the approval and if the air rights vacation is not approved, we would need to build the skyway at a later time.

Mr. Prins shared an update on the bids for building; the lowest is $11.5 million, not including soft costs. They are currently working on ways to lower the total project costs to be between $11 and $12 million. The hope is that we can have hard numbers from the contractor and cut $1.3 to $1.8 million dollars from the project in the next week or two.

Dr. Wedlund reviewed the pieces we need in place before we can go forward to bond.

Mr. Sample shared some highlights from PiperSandler's presentation last week, including the two big levers financially – how much we pay above lease aid and how much we put in initially.

Heather Meeker left at 9:03 pm.

Mr. Sample continued that we will most likely need to pay over $100,000 above max lease aid each year so board members need to think about where we no longer feel comfortable paying that amount.

There was discussion.

E. <u>Contract with Arvig for Network Service</u>
Dr. Wedlund gave background information.

Ms. Lund, "Resolved, that the Board approves the contract with Arvig for Network Services." Ms. Hansen seconded. Mr. Flesher, Ms. Hansen, Mr. Hooge, Ms. Lund, Mr. Sample, Mr. Shepard, Ms. Weston, and Ms. Wikman voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

X. <u>Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items</u>
The next regular board meeting will be on Monday, October 27, 2025.

XI. <u>Adjournment</u>
The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Becky Lund.