

Executive Director's Report to the Board

Date of the Report: July 19, 2022

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Enrollment

As we approach the start of the school year, we always want to have a sense of where our enrollment falls. There is typically a decent amount of student movement during the first few weeks of the school year which is why the official student count does not occur until October 1st. However, as of August 25th we had 1045 students enrolled with offers out for an additional 4 vacancies. When the Board meets next month, we should have a much more stable view of our enrollment numbers.

Special Education Wages

As the job markets continue to evolve, we are uncomfortable with the impact that is having on our ability to fill roles in our Special Education Department including teachers and paraprofessionals. This past spring, we introduced a pay differential between Special Education and General Education wages at Nova Classical. While I still believe this was a necessary approach, the differential we implemented was not large enough to yield the desired results. We are now moving forward with a plan to widen the differential in wages for Special Education staff. As a result of this change, most of our Special Education (new and existing) will be compensated at, or slightly higher, than similar roles at other schools in the area including in the St. Paul Public School district. Due to the Special Education funding formulas and reimbursements, this change is expected to have a net impact on our overall budget of under \$20,000. If it were not allocated towards this, this is money which would not legally be able used in any other part of Nova Classical's operations. We are hopeful that this change will allow us to fill the remaining openings in the Special Education department as well as retain our existing Special Education staff. This will have a positive impact on our students and overall school as our population of students who receive Special Education services continue to grow.

2022 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs)

The Minnesota Department of Education publicly released the 2022 spring MCA assessment results on August 25th. While we will not be presenting a deep dive into the results (which occurs at the September meeting), I am pleased to share that after viewing the state results the following high-level trends were seen:

- Nova Classical was the #3 ranked district/charter in math proficiency.
- Nova Classical was the #3 ranked district/charter in reading proficiency.
- Nova Classical's students had higher math progress scores in 2022 than they did the year before the pandemic (2019).
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In classical education common definitions are important, so you can [click here](#) to learn more about how MDE and Nova Classical **define progress**. We will discuss these results in further detail once we have had more time to analyze them. However, for now it is great to know that our students are both leaders in the state in terms of proficiency and they are surpassing their pre-pandemic (2019) levels of progress.

Start of Fall Sports

The fall sports seasons are getting underway. This fall has seen the following participation numbers:

Activity	Participants	
Boys & Girls Cross Country	37	Highest participation was 42 in 2019
Boys Soccer	48	2 nd highest participation in school history
Girls Soccer	30	Highest participation in school history which will allow us to have a JV team for the first time
Volleyball	45	Highest participation in school history
Girls Tennis (coop)	3	
Football (coop)	2	

Technical vs. Adaptive

One of my most important roles is to ensure that the leadership team has the knowledge and skills necessary for them to be successful in their roles. This summer, our leadership team spent a significant amount of time learning about and discussing the differences between technical problems and adaptive challenges. The solutions to these types of scenarios are different and our conversations and reflections are intended to empower our leaders to oversee the areas for which they are responsible while also working collaboratively with others.

Staff Return & Update

As we prepare for the school year, we are excited to have a number of new staff members join us. They include:

Abby Kelley-Hands	-	Special Education Coordinator
Elizabeth Irish	-	Paraprofessional
Jacob Larson	-	Special Education Teacher
Claire Helin	-	Kindergarten Teacher
Caitlin Kohler (New Role)	-	Kindergarten Teacher
Michelle Nilles	-	Educational Assistant
Chase Adelsman	-	In-House Substitute
Evan Aho	-	Latin Teacher
Dr. Jane Benacquista	-	English/Language Arts Teacher
Emily Rau	-	English/Language Arts Teacher
Madeline Smoot	-	Music Teacher

Most of the new staff reported August 18th and participated in two days of classical education training. The full staff reports on August 22nd. As we return to a more normal operating model, this year's staff trainings focused on reestablishing a solid foundation. Staff participated in sessions highlighting the role of strategic planning in moving forward from the pandemic, a history of Nova presented by the staff members who have been here throughout Nova's entire existence, a history of the charter school movement in Minnesota and learning about our authorizer and other entities to which Nova is accountable. Lower School staff also participated in trainings related to Signapore Math, Phonograms, Playworks and Catalyst (classroom management). The Upper School staff spent time looking at school culture and common expectations.