

Nova Classical Academy School Board Training Session  
Monday, May 22, 2023

Background

This session builds on training and counsel provided by Nova's legal counsel, Mr. Martin, as well as training conducted by Dr. Lovett at meetings of the Nova board on February 28 and April 25, 2022.

Materials:

Attached are:

- Agenda and objectives
- Brief bios of facilitators
- Slides for presentation on the Minnesota Open Meeting Law
- Slides for presentation on the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act
- Resource documents:
  - Levels of authority affecting public preschool, elementary and secondary schools
  - Building a strong school board/leadership team relationship

Objectives for board session on May 22, 2023

To provide a foundation for new training by reviewing:

- The importance of organization mission and individual purpose.
- The role of a school board and school board members under different levels of authority.
- Distinguishing between board member roles as *Trustees vs. Delegates*, and developing a framework for respectful board discussions and decisions.
- The role of a school board under Minnesota State Statutes and state rules and being able to distinguish between what responsibilities are properly the role of a school board and what are properly delegated to the administration by law, policy and wise practice.
- Communication skills important for board/executive director work and performance

To review areas of law and policy pertaining to the Open Meeting Laws and Data Practices Act to assure that the board understands the legal principles and acts in accordance with the law.

- The Minnesota Open Meeting Law, Minn. Stat. Chap. 13D
- The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minn. Stat. Chap 13

## Outline of Training

### **Topic 1: Role and Purpose**

- Understand the importance of organization mission and individual purpose.

Beginning with reflections on **why** you are serving, we will consider the **role of the school board through two frameworks.**

For all board members, we will ask you to reflect and share:

- Why did you decide to serve on the school board?
- What do you think you have to offer that will help the board successfully serve students and the community?

Especially for experienced board members:

- What do you believe your board has been doing well?
- What are specific areas where you see opportunities as a board to learn and improve?

### **Topic 2: Trustee or Delegate?**

- Distinguish between board member roles as *Trustees vs. Delegates* and develop a framework for respectful board discussions and decisions.

**Delegate** board member: A board member who behaves politically in an effort to satisfy personal or pressure group interests.

**Trustee** board member: normative role characterization that is the antithesis of a delegate board member and prescribes that board members act objectively and rationally serving broad public interest and working in the overall best interests of board and the organization.

*Source: Kowalski, T. (2013). "The School Superintendent: Theory, Practice and Cases" (3rd ed.)*

### **Topic 3: Levels of Authority (see attached document; please read in advance)**

- Understand the role of a school board and school board members under different levels of authority.

*Source: Lovett, Michael J. and Martin, James K, (2022) "Levels of Authority Affecting Public Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Schools"*

#### **Topic 4: Understanding the Minnesota Open Meeting Law**

#### **Topic 5: Understanding the Minnesota Data Practices Law**

#### **Topic 6: Application and Discussion**

#### **Topic 7: Roles of School Board and Administration**

- Understand the roles of a school board under *Minnesota State Statutes* and *State Rules*; and be able to distinguish between what responsibilities are properly the role of a school board and what are properly delegated to the administration by law, policy and wise practice.
- Activities and discussion
  - Review and discuss common issues
  - Understanding and being able to distinguish between:
    - **Strategic** versus **operational** issues and decisions;
    - Decisions which the **board is required to make under State law**;
    - Decisions which are **appropriately made by administration**;
    - The proper roles of **board policy** (approved by the school board) and **administrative procedures** ( responsibilities delegated to the administration to be made consistent with and carrying out the intent of the more general legal framework or aspirational board policy.)
    - **Practical guidance** on understanding and respecting the respective roles of board and administration.

*Source: professional experience (unpublished); any materials used in examples or discussion from other sources will be properly acknowledged and cited.*

#### **Topic 8: The Six C's (see attached document; please read in advance)**

- Build communication skills and establish trust for board/executive director work and performance

Cohesiveness

Communication

Community

Conduct

Compliance

Compassion

*Source: February 2022 update based on work of Lovett, Michael and Kimball, George (2017) "Building a strong school board/superintendent relationship," Minnesota School Board Association.*

### Facilitator Biographies

**Mr. Martin** serves as legal counsel for Nova Classical Academy.

He has practiced employment law for over thirty (30) years and currently practices law at Martin Law Firm PLLC. Prior to starting Martin Law Firm PLLC in April 2019 Mr. Martin has worked at small, medium and large law firms practicing in the areas of labor, employment and school law.

During his career he has served as the Executive Director of Human Resources for Bloomington Public Schools from 1998 to 2005 and the Director of Human Resources for St. Louis Park Public Schools from 1993 to 1998. Mr. Martin also serves as a neutral investigator conducting employment investigations and has served as a hearing officer in employment arbitrations and student expulsion hearings.

He earned his B.A. in Psychology from William Jewell College, Liberty, MO, his M.S. in Industrial Relations from Purdue University and his J.D. from William Mitchell (now Mitchell/Hamline) College of Law, St. Paul, MN.

For more detail please see [www.jameskmartinlawfirm.com](http://www.jameskmartinlawfirm.com) or [Linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com).

**Dr. Lovett** was superintendent of the White Bear Lake Public Schools in Minnesota from 2008 through 2017, after serving as assistant superintendent with the Minnetonka Public Schools from 1988 to 2008. Between 1970 and 1988, he was a public school teacher in New York, an administrator at school site and district levels in Minnesota, and in a leadership role at the Minnesota Department of Education.

For more than 40 years, he has also taught graduate level courses as an adjunct faculty in educational leadership and policy at Minnesota universities. Areas of teaching experience include human resources; school finance; strategic planning; research design, analysis and critique; and superintendency.

During the past five decades he has presented on a educational topics to Minnesota and National conferences; traveled internationally to Asia, Africa, and Europe for education and nonprofit

partnerships; is the author of journal articles on educational finance and law; published a book and video series on teacher retention; an essay for an international text on leadership and administrative support of inclusion; and since 1999 has been a regular and extensive contributor to national publications on education.

Since his retirement from full time work in 2017 he has expanded teaching at the graduate level, currently serving as adjunct faculty at both the University of Minnesota and University of St. Thomas; provides both pro-bono and fee-based strategic leadership mentoring and management consulting to educational and nonprofit leaders through *Lovett Leadership LLC*; and is active on several nonprofit boards.

Dr. Lovett earned his B.A. in History from Carleton College, Northfield, MN, in 1970, also attending Doshisha University in Japan in 1969; and M.A. (1973) and Ph.D. (1979) degrees in Educational Leadership and Policy from the University of Minnesota.

For more detail please see <https://www.linkedin.com/in/michael-lovett-phd/>