

NOVA ACADEMY

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – October 24, 2019, 6:00 PM
500 W Santa Ana Blvd, Santa Ana, CA 92701

CALL MEETING TO ORDER: 6:00 PM

The meeting was called to order by Board Chairman, Dr. Sanford Otsuji.

Members Present:

Dr. Sanford Otsuji, Chairman
Dr. Susan Garrett, Co-Chair
Norm Lester, Secretary
Karen Lester, Treasurer
Gloria Grana, Member
Rick Weir, Member
Olga Duarte, Member

Members Not Present

None

Staff Present

Renee Lancaster, CEO/Founder
John Bowen, Director of Human Resources & Operations
Mark Cruickshank, Assistant Principal
Angie Dillon, Executive Assistant
Carrie Cornwall, Marketing Consultant

Members Present via Conference Line:

None

Staff Present via Conference Line:

Lisa Hernandez, Principal

CONSENT CALENDAR

The Consent Calendar was presented for approval. The Consent Calendar contained the following matters:

- Minutes from the 8-23-2019 Board Meeting
- Coachella field trip to Cal State San Bernardino
- Santa Ana field trips to USC and Long Beach Aquarium

Motion to approve the Minutes from the August 23, 2019 Board Meeting, the Coachella field trip to Cal State Bernardino, and the Santa Ana field trips to USC and Long Beach Aquarium.

Motion: Susan Garrett

Second: Karen Lester

Vote	Yes	No	Abstain	Conference Line
S. Otsuji	X			
S. Garrett	X			
N. Lester	X			
K. Lester	X			
G. Grana	X			
R. Weir	X			
O. Duarte	X			

CLOSED SESSION

Conference with Legal Counsel, Anticipated Litigation (§ 54956.9)

Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to paragraph (2) or (3) of subdivision (d) of Section 54956.9:
1 potential case

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

No action to report.

CLOSED SESSION

Conference with Legal Counsel, Anticipated Litigation (§ 54956.9)

Initiation of litigation pursuant to paragraph (4) of subdivision (d) of Section 54956.9: 1 potential case

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

No action to report.

CLOSED SESSION

Confidential Student Discipline Matter – Consideration of Potential Expulsion Case No.: 201901

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

Dr. Sanford Otsuji reported that the Board voted unanimously to approve the Stipulated Expulsion Order to expel pupil in Case No.: 201901.

Vote	Yes	No	Abstain	Conference Line
S. Otsuji	X			
S. Garrett	X			
N. Lester	X			
K. Lester	X			
G. Grana	X			
R. Weir	X			
O. Duarte	X			

CALIFORNIA SCHOOL DASHBOARD/LOCAL INDICATORS

Lisa Hernandez, Principal, presented on the California Dashboard and Local Indicators for the Coachella campus. She reported that students' scores on the CAASPP significantly increased from the previous year. In English language arts/literacy (ELA), scores are double the scores from other schools in the district. NOVA students also outperformed surrounding schools in mathematics. Ms. Hernandez shared that the school had a campaign to help students with writing, math, and test taking skills.

Regarding parent engagement, the Coachella campus hosted several events, including FAFSA Information Night, Back to School Night, and Coffee with the Principal. Ms. Hernandez said the events consistently have a good turnout. Students and parents were surveyed on school climate. Ninety-seven percent of students reported that they believe teachers expect them to achieve. Ms. Hernandez shared that the Coachella campus conducts focus groups to learn about student concerns. She said they want to identify what they can do better in order to meet everyone's needs.

Mark Cruickshank, Assistant Principal, presented on the California Dashboard and Local Indicators for the Santa Ana campus. On the recent CAASPP test, students outperformed most surrounding schools. In ELA, scores dropped slightly, although mathematics scores improved. Mathematics scores have been increasing over the last two years. At the next Professional Development meeting, teachers will be looking closely at the data.

On school climate, Mark Cruickshank shared that 95 percent of parents reported that NOVA Academy prepares students to be college and career ready and 96 percent reported that teachers expect students to learn and achieve at a high level. Ninety percent of students reported an overall satisfaction with the school with 88 percent reporting that they feel safe.

In the College Career Indicator section of the Dashboard, English Language (EL) students jumped in the College Prepared category. The Santa Ana campus is currently offering eleven AP classes. Mr. Cruickshank said 124 students attended college courses in Fall 2018, 193 students attended college courses in Spring 2019, and 46 students took college courses over the summer.

Mr. Cruickshank said teachers are calling parents twice a month for positive phone calls.

COLLEGE AND CAREER ACCESS PATHWAYS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH THE DESERT COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

For Board approval, Lisa Hernandez presented the Desert Community College District contract for Coachella students to attend their community college courses. The contract was previously presented at the August 23, 2019 Board Meeting for review only.

Motion to approve Desert Community College District Contract for NOVA Academy-Coachella.

Motion: Susan Garrett

Second: Rick Weir

Vote	Yes	No	Abstain	Conference Line
S. Otsuji	X			
S. Garrett	X			
N. Lester	X			
K. Lester	X			
G. Grana	X			
R. Weir	X			
O. Duarte	X			

Dr. Sanford Otsuji left the meeting at 8:30 PM.

EXECUTIVE REPORT

Renee Lancaster introduced Carrie Cornwall, Marketing Consultant for NOVA Academy. Ms. Cornwall reported on current enrollment trends in Orange County. Over the past eight years, enrollment has been decreasing throughout Orange County and California. Lower enrollment is attributed to a lower birth rate and families moving out of California. Surrounding schools are increasing their marketing efforts.

Carrie Cornwall and Renee Lancaster completed a SWOT Analysis for NOVA Academy-Santa Ana. They took survey feedback from students and parents into account. They found many strengths, including having a 100 percent graduation rate last year, receiving the California Distinguished School Award, and being in operation for fifteen years. There is good word-of-mouth among students and parents for referring new students. Classrooms have a low student-to-teacher ratio.

A weakness is that the school does not offer an athletics program. Ms. Cornwall said either the school can look into developing an athletics program or focus solely on academics.

Faculty and staff turnover is high. There are community events coming up and staff is needed to help manage the events. Renee Lancaster said the school recently posted a position for a Family Engagement Coordinator.

Carrie Cornwall went on to report that the school is lacking an alumni connection. Karen Lester, Board Treasurer, commented on the importance of getting in touch with alumni for word-of-mouth referrals.

Carrie Cornwall said NOVA Academy needs its social media to shine. The school is doing many great things but they are not posted. Social media is free.

Another weakness is that the school building has a low traffic location. This year, fourteen people learned about NOVA Academy from driving past the building. People unfamiliar with NOVA Academy think it is a private school.

Carrie Cornwall went on to list opportunities, which include parents, alumni, and the new OC Streetcar. She recommended that the school develop more advisory councils to help increase involvement with

the community. Ms. Cornwall said parents are becoming more web-savvy. From the survey, respondents reported that the top way they heard of NOVA Academy was through Google. There is more exposure now through smartphone use.

This semester, NOVA students are taking over 40 different college courses. Last semester, students took 95 different college courses.

Dr. Susan Garrett, Board Co-Chair, said it is impressive that NOVA Academy students completed so many college courses at no cost. She recommended that this information be included in the messaging on the school's social media.

Olga Duarte, Board Member, said she believes NOVA Academy's students are getting a private school education for free. She said Hispanic parents want their children to break the cycle of poverty and increase opportunity for the next generation.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Geetha Huma, CFO of Charter Impact, presented a Financial Update for NOVA Academy-Santa Ana. Attendance is higher than budgeted – it was 96.2 percent compared to the forecast of 95.5 percent. There is a deficit of \$485K forecasted for 2019-2020. Due to the SAUSD special education encroachment, some expenses will be put on hold, such as PE equipment. Karen Lester commented that there are some discrepancies in coding but they will be updated in the next financial report.

Geetha Huma presented a Financial Update for NOVA Academy-Coachella. She said attendance and ADA is higher than budgeted, which brought in more revenue than what was in the budget. Expenses decreased due to adjustments in payroll and books and supplies. A surplus is forecasted for 2019-2020. Karen Lester said some expenses will be re-categorized due to coding but the bottom line will not change.

FREE & REDUCED-PRICE MEALS POLICY

John Bowen, Director of Human Resources & Operations, presented the Free & Reduced-Price Meals Policy for Board approval. Mr. Bowen said the school already provides breakfast and lunch. Norm Lester, Board Secretary, asked how the school knows which students qualify for a free or reduced meal. Mr. Bowen said students simply enter their student identification number when ordering their meal. A student's free or reduced meal status is confidential. Only the food server sees the information in order to ensure the student qualifies. No one else knows if the students are paying cash, if they are free, or if they are reduced.

Motion to approve Free & Reduced-Price Meals Policy.

Motion: Norm Lester

Second: Gloria Grana

Vote	Yes	No	Abstain	Conference Line
S. Otsuji	X			
S. Garrett	X			
N. Lester	X			
K. Lester	X			
G. Grana	X			
R. Weir	X			
O. Duarte	X			

BOARD RESOLUTION

Renee Lancaster presented the Board Resolution to Authorize Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) to Issue Funds to NOVA Academy. Currently, the Orange County Treasury receives money from the state and federal government to be issued to NOVA Academy-Santa Ana. The Orange County Treasury will not receive the funds anymore. The funds will go directly into the school's bank account. As a mandate, there must be a Board Resolution to allow the transfer.

Motion to approve Board Resolution to Authorize Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) to Issue Funds to NOVA Academy.

Motion: Rick Weir

Second: Karen Lester

Vote	Yes	No	Abstain	Conference Line
S. Otsuji	X			
S. Garrett	X			
N. Lester	X			
K. Lester	X			
G. Grana	X			
R. Weir	X			
O. Duarte	X			

DONATION TO NOVA ACADEMY-COACHELLA

For Board approval, Renee Lancaster presented the donation of plastic tiles for sports floors to the Coachella campus.

Motion to approve donation of plastic tiles to NOVA Academy-Coachella.

Motion: Karen Lester

Second: Rick Weir

Vote	Yes	No	Abstain	Conference Line
S. Otsuji	X			
S. Garrett	X			
N. Lester	X			
K. Lester	X			
G. Grana	X			
R. Weir	X			
O. Duarte	X			

DONATION TO NOVA ACADEMY-SANTA ANA

For Board approval, Renee presented the donation of twenty-one (21) Dell laptop computers from Intel Corporation to the Santa Ana campus. A representative from Fry's Electronics in Fountain Valley had selected NOVA Academy to receive the donation.

Motion to approve donation of Dell laptop computers to NOVA Academy-Santa Ana.

Motion: Norm Lester

Second: Olga Duarte

Vote	Yes	No	Abstain	Conference Line
S. Otsuji	X			
S. Garrett	X			
N. Lester	X			
K. Lester	X			
G. Grana	X			
R. Weir	X			
O. Duarte	X			

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN NOVA ACADEMY AND RANCHO SANTIAGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT (RSCCD)

Renee Lancaster reported that the Santa Ana campus and Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) developed a five-year MOU for students taking courses at Santa Ana College. Having an MOU is a big accomplishment for the school. NOVA Academy is the only school in Santa Ana that has one. The MOU will need to be approved by the NOVA Academy Board and the RSCCD Board.

Motion to approve MOU between NOVA Academy and RSCCD.

Motion: Karen Lester

Second: Rick Weir

Vote	Yes	No	Abstain	Conference Line
S. Otsuji	X			
S. Garrett	X			
N. Lester	X			
K. Lester	X			
G. Grana	X			
R. Weir	X			
O. Duarte	X			

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 PM.



Norm Lester