

NOVA ACADEMY

Board of Directors Special Meeting Minutes – August 25, 2020, 6:00 PM

Meeting Conducted via Teleconference

CALL MEETING TO ORDER: 6:00 PM

Board Chairman, Dr. Sanford Otsuji, called the meeting to order.

Members Present:

Dr. Sanford Otsuji, Chairman

Dr. Susan Garrett, Co-Chair

Norm Lester, Secretary

Karen Lester, Treasurer

Rick Weir, Member

Olga Duarte, Member

Members Not Present

None

Staff Present

Renee Lancaster, Chief Executive Officer/Founder

Lisa Hernandez, Principal, NOVA Academy-Coachella

Regina Flores-Dunda, Principal, NOVA Academy-Santa Ana

Milton Davis, Director of Development, NOVA Academy Children's Foundation

Alicia Lewis, Business Services Manager

Angie Dillon, Executive Assistant

Olga Duarte, Board Member, motioned to add the Consolidated Application for NOVA Academy-Coachella and NOVA Academy-Santa Ana to the Board Agenda as item #12 and all remaining items will drop down one spot.

Motion: Olga Duarte

Second: Dr. Susan Garrett

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

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None

NOVA ACADEMY CAMPUS UPDATES

Lisa Hernandez, Principal of NOVA Academy-Coachella, shared updates on the Coachella campus. On August 18, the first day of school, they had 241 enrolled students and a 90% attendance rate. Attendance for virtual instruction was better than expected, although there were issues with internet connectivity due to the area. Ms. Hernandez was happy to share that attendance has gone up, and today's attendance rate is 96%.

Regarding facility upgrades, Lisa Hernandez said there are safety partitions in all classrooms and COVID-19 signs for directing student traffic and safety reminders, such as wearing a facemask and staying home if feeling sick. Ms. Hernandez said teachers came to campus for Professional Development and had an opportunity to sit at the students' desks to experience what it will be like from their perspective. Teachers expressed positive feedback on all of the safety measures to protect students and staff.

The Coachella campus now has a large green field of artificial turf. Lisa Hernandez said the artificial turf is low maintenance, and it will allow students room to sit and hang out while spread safely apart. They have tables and shading that they plan to put out on the turf when students return to campus. Ms. Hernandez is looking forward to when students can enjoy the new space – she knows they will love it.

Coachella campus hired two new teachers for this school year, including a full-time special education teacher. They have a science teacher position that is still open. Lisa Hernandez said they have a long-term substitute teacher teaching their science courses, and this person is doing an excellent job. In addition to having a full-time special education teacher, they have a full-time special education aide, who is doing very well with their students.

Lisa Hernandez shared that they hosted a parent orientation series at the start of school in August. They communicated their plan for their academic program and answered parent questions. Ms. Hernandez said many of their parents expressed feeling uneasy. They had over a hundred parents participate, which was a great turnout.

Lisa Hernandez said they are regularly communicating with parents via letters, emails, and social media posts. They utilize a communication system via Aeries, where automated messages are delivered to parents in Spanish. Teachers are making positive outreach calls to parents Monday through Friday. They are also making daily attendance calls to let parents know when their students are absent; Ms. Hernandez believes the calls are helping their attendance rate. Parents are invited to their children's Google Classroom to monitor what they are doing, get weekly announcements, and see that their children are completing their assignments. Ms. Hernandez said they have a virtual School Site Council meeting and Parent University coming up. They will host meetings at different times, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, so working parents with different availability can attend.

For the first week of school in Coachella, teachers administered benchmark assessments to evaluate learning loss. They are also doing a campus-wide social-emotional learning survey. They had a staff meeting on Monday, and teachers expressed excitement about their students' access to information and participation in distance learning. Teachers said students are asking questions and are engaged. Currently, they have twenty-six students taking college courses at the College of the Desert. They issued out 240 Chromebooks and have fifty devices on-hand as replacements if needed. They purchased thirty mobile hotspots for families who do not have internet in their homes or have unreliable internet. They bought Dell laptop computers for all of their teachers to teach via distance learning. They also purchased desktop cameras for video meetings. The Coachella campus received a grant for \$26,000 from the Anderson Children's Foundation for their Reach program. Trevor Garrett, Proposal Coordinator/Data Impact Analyst, helped the school get the grant.

Lisa Hernandez said they are providing Grab-and-Go meal distribution, Monday through Friday. They have two pick-up times for meal services, one in the morning and one later in the afternoon, to meet the needs of working families

Regina Flores-Dunda, Principal of NOVA Academy-Santa Ana, shared updates on the Santa Ana campus. She said students had Family Class all day on the first day of school to help them become oriented to distance learning. It was primarily out of care and concern for their 9th graders and new students. Teachers sent out a Google Classroom link in advance of the first day of school so students could join early and get acquainted. Family Teachers on-boarded students on NOVA processes and spent time relationship-building. The school counselors gave presentations during Family Classes. Ms. Flores-Dunda shared that Stephanie Cuevas, the school's Family Engagement Coordinator, also gave a special presentation to incoming 9th graders and new students.

Regina Flores-Dunda said the attendance rate on the first day of school was 94%. She and her team have spent the last week working on APEX integration, their pre-built online curriculum, to ensure a smooth transition as they toggle back and forth between distance learning and hybrid learning. They have a solid online curriculum that students can access anywhere to ensure learning continuity and reduce learning loss. They are focused on establishing relationships and preparing students for academic rigor. Courses at Santa Ana College began yesterday. Sixty students are enrolled in classes; a few more have turned in their applications and will be added this week.

The Santa Ana campus will be hosting a virtual Back to School Night to be held on Thursday, September 17. Parents will follow their students' schedules through a virtual environment and spend ten minutes with each teacher getting to know them. Teachers will go over their syllabus and help parents get to know their expectations. ASB is getting to work planning Spirit Week, virtual assemblies, and their daily announcements. They are also planning for Parent University.

Regina Flores-Dunda shared that one of her long-term goals as Principal is to not only help students get admitted to college but also help them develop the tools to get *through* college. Second, she aims to

ensure the school provides equitable access to rigorous and engaging coursework. Third, her goal is to develop the Whole Child with the wraparound supports the school offers. At Professional Development, she and the teachers went over the keys to college and career readiness. She stressed the interconnectedness between the Whole Child elements to ensure students have the tools to be successful academically, emotionally, and socially.

Board Members expressed that they were impressed with the Principals' campus presentations and are excited for what lies ahead.

NOVA ACADEMY CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Milton Davis introduced himself to the Board as the new Director of Development for the NOVA Academy Children's Foundation ("Foundation"). Having a strong background in non-profit and campaign fundraising, Mr. Davis is excited to serve in this new role. He presented a review of the fundraising picture for 2019-2020 and shared goals for the coming year. One of his objectives is to re-engage and diversify the school's individual donor stream, pointing out Facebook Giving Tuesday's success as an example. Mr. Davis shared that he would like to get more people involved on the Foundation Board. Board Members welcomed Mr. Milton and thanked him for his presentation.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The Consent Calendar contained the following matters:

- Minutes from the 6-23-2020 Special Board Meeting
- Minutes from the 6-29-2020 Special Board Meeting

Dr. Susan Garrett, Board Co-Chair, motioned to approve the Minutes from the June 23, 2020, Special Board Meeting, and the Minutes from the June 29, 2020, Special Board Meeting.

Motion: Dr. Susan Garrett

Second: Rick Weir

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

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

There was no action taken.

CLOSED SESSION

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE

TITLE: PRINCIPAL

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

Dr. Sanford Otsuji reported that the Board agreed to ratify Regina Flores-Dunda's base salary to include the following verbiage: in addition to the employee's base salary, the employee will be eligible to receive a performance incentive payment of \$7,000 based on reaching the enrollment of 380 students by the CBEDS reporting date of October 7, 2020. The performance incentive payment will be paid in two payments – 50% on December 24, 2020, and 50% on June 25, 2021. Dr. Otsuji reported that Board approval was unanimous.

UNAUDITED ACTUALS

Geetha Huma, Director of Client Finance at Charter Impact, presented the 2019-2020 Unaudited Actuals and financial update on NOVA Academy-Coachella. She said revenue was higher than budgeted. The ADA at P2 came in at 215. There were also savings in expenses, such as salaries and fees for substitute teachers. Overall, there are no cash flow concerns.

Next, Geetha Huma presented the 2019-2020 Unaudited Actuals and financial update on NOVA Academy-Santa Ana. She said revenue came in less than budgeted as the result of lower ADA. Grants and rewards and overall savings in expenses offset the variance. Ms. Huma said there were savings in all expense categories, except the Special Education encroachment from Santa Ana Unified School District. Santa Ana's budget will meet the bond covenant.

Dr. Susan Garrett motioned to approve the 2019-2020 Unaudited Actuals for NOVA Academy-Coachella.

Motion: Dr. Susan Garrett**Second:** Norm Lester

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

Dr. Susan Garrett motioned to approve the 2019-2020 Unaudited Actuals for NOVA Academy-Santa Ana.

Motion: Dr. Susan Garrett **Second:** Karen Lester

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

EDUCATION PROTECTION ACCOUNT (EPA) PLAN

Geetha Huma presented the Education Protection Account (EPA) Plans for the Coachella and Santa Ana campuses. The EPA Plan is a document that shows the public that EPA funds are being used towards instructional costs only. It is updated annually and needs to be posted on the school's website. Ms. Huma explained that the EPA plan includes a Board Resolution that must be signed and posted on the school's website as well.

Dr. Susan Garrett motioned to approve the EPA Plan for NOVA Academy-Coachella.

Motion: Dr. Susan Garrett **Second:** Norm Lester

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

Dr. Susan Garrett motioned to approve the EPA Plan for NOVA Academy-Santa Ana.

Motion: Dr. Susan Garrett **Second:** Olga Duarte

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

Dr. Susan Garrett motioned to change the agenda item number for the Consolidated Application to #13.

Motion: Dr. Susan Garrett **Second:** Olga Duarte

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

CONSOLIDATED APPLICATION

The Consolidated Application is an application for federal funding for 2020-2021 while showing what funds are unspent from 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. Geetha Huma reported that there are no balances unspent for both the Coachella and Santa Ana campuses.

Dr. Susan Garrett motioned to approve the Consolidation Application for NOVA Academy-Coachella.

Motion: Dr. Susan Garrett **Second:** Norm Lester

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

Dr. Susan Garrett motioned to approve the Consolidation Application for NOVA Academy-Santa Ana.

Motion: Dr. Susan Garrett **Second:** Norm Lester

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

EXECUTIVE REPORT

Renee Lancaster, CEO of NOVA Academy, shared that the Coachella and Santa Ana campuses are working on a Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan. The plan describes how they will help students with learning loss and structure their programs to ensure they are prepared with safety and health measures. The plan requires all stakeholders to be involved, including teachers, parents, students, and

Board Members. The campuses will present their Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan at the next Board Meeting on September 15 for Board input. They will be on the agenda for Board approval at the September 21 Board Meeting.

Renee Lancaster reported that the NOVA Academy campuses received funds from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, a federal grant for purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE). They bought facemasks for all students and staff, disposable facemasks, disposable gloves, face shields for teachers, hand sanitizers for every classroom, signage in hallways, stairwells, and common areas, physical distancing partitions, partitions for teachers' desks, and touchless thermometers. Ms. Lancaster said they are doing everything they can to ensure their staff and students' health and safety. She reported that the schools also received Learning Loss Mitigation funds. They will use the funds to help students with English Language Development and Mathematics during Link and Tutorial, and APEX recovery courses during winter intersession.

Renee Lancaster shared an update on the California legislature. Legislators will meet this week to discuss how they will use their reserves. Ms. Lancaster said she expects the payment of state funds to be deferred until the following school year, starting February 2021. The California government will make plans to shift spending and reduce costs, although there is hope that federal stimulus funding will come through.

Orange County is currently on the COVID-19 watch list. Renee Lancaster and her team are waiting to learn when they can begin their hybrid instruction program. A county must be off the list for fourteen days. When they can offer hybrid instruction, they will also provide a 100% distance learning program for families who wish to keep their children at home.

Board Members expressed that they know Renee Lancaster and her team are working hard, and they are thankful. Ms. Lancaster said she is working with a great team of staff members, the best the school has had in a long time.

BOARD RESOLUTION - AMENDMENT OF THE NOVA ACADEMY CAFETERIA PLAN FOR 2020-2021

Alicia Lewis, Business Services Manager, presented the Board Resolution – Amendment of the NOVA Academy Cafeteria Plan for 2020-2021. Due to COVID-19 and the stay-at-home order, the school conducted the annual open enrollment benefits meeting virtually. Staff members did not get an ample opportunity to meet with the school's benefits representatives individually. After the open enrollment period ended, some employees wanted to reconsider their FSA contributions. With the Board Resolution, the new open enrollment period will end on September 1, 2020, and employees will be able to make changes to their benefits plan until then.

Dr. Susan Garrett motioned to approve the Board Resolution to amend the NOVA Academy Cafeteria Plan for 2020-2021.

Motion: Dr. Susan Garrett **Second:** Olga Duarte

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

BOARD RESOLUTION - LOCAL ASSIGNMENT OPTION FOR 2020-2021

For Board approval, Alicia Lewis presented the Board Resolution – Local Assignment Option for 2020-2021. NOVA Academy has a new online platform for distance learning that offers music appreciation and physical education. The Santa Ana campus does not currently have a PE teacher or a teacher with a specific credential to teach music appreciation. The Local Assignment Board Resolution will allow the school to assign coursework to instructional staff who do not have a specific credential to teach in a specific course. Per Board approval of the Board Resolution, music appreciation will be assigned to teachers Andrew Fong, Juanita Lee, and Thomas Butler, and physical education will be assigned to teachers Chloe Provance, Alexander Wilson, Sean Mitchell, and Alejandro Delgado.

Dr. Susan Garret motioned to approve the Board Resolution – Local Assignment Option for 2020-2021.

Motion: Dr. Susan Garrett **Second:** Norm Lester

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

ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2020-2021

Rick Weir, Board Member, motioned to approve the Board of Directors' current officers for 2020-2021: Dr. Sanford Otsuji as Chairman, Dr. Susan Garrett as Co-Chair, Norm Lester as Secretary, Karen Lester as Treasurer, Rick Weir as Board Member, and Olga Duarte as Board Member.


Motion: Rick Weir

Second: Olga Duarte

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

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 PM.

 8-25-2020

Norm Lester