

NOVA ACADEMY

Board of Directors Special Meeting Minutes – September 15, 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

Olga Duarte, Member

Members Not Present

Rick Weir, Member

Staff Present

Renee Lancaster, Chief Executive Officer/Founder

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

Adrienne Haggerty, Assistant Principal, NOVA Academy-Coachella

Alicia Lewis, Business Services Manager

Angie Dillon, Executive Assistant

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None

CONSENT CALENDAR

The Consent Calendar contained the following matters:

- Minutes from the 7-08-2020 Special Board Meeting
- Minutes from the 7-20-2020 Special Board Meeting

Dr. Susan Garrett, Board Co-Chair, motioned to approve the Minutes from the July 8, 2020, Special Board Meeting, and the Minutes from the July 20, 2020, Special Board Meeting.

Motion: Dr. Susan Garrett

Second: Norm Lester

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

LEARNING CONTINUITY AND ATTENDANCE PLAN

Renee Lancaster, CEO of NOVA Academy, shared that the Coachella and Santa Ana campuses are presenting their draft of the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan. California Senate Bill (SB) 98 mandates that schools create the plan to show how they will increase services and help students mitigate learning loss with restricted government funds. There are several requirements for the plan, such as taking attendance daily and having live interaction. Schools need to account for student participation during the day, engagement, family outreach, and a tiered support plan. All stakeholders in the school need to be involved. Ms. Lancaster said the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan has information about extended instructional minutes for LINK, winter intersession and summer school, and social-emotional support in Family and Seminar classes.

Adrienne Haggerty, Assistant Principal of NOVA Academy-Coachella, presented Coachella's Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan. For stakeholder engagement, they collected input from teachers, students, and parents. They conducted surveys, had conversations with small groups of parents via Zoom, and made individual phone calls. Ms. Haggerty said parents shared concerns about food distribution, internet connectivity, and student learning. For continuity of learning, Ms. Haggerty and her team looked at campus safety for when students return to campus, distance learning, reliable internet for synchronous learning, the need to purchase hot spots, and a one-to-one device program.

Adrienne Haggerty said Coachella's Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan includes references to publications on learning loss mitigation, such as John Hattie's research on "Visible Learning" and "Teaching in the Fast Lane" by Suzy Pepper Rollins. Rollins' work discusses acceleration versus remediation, which is where college courses come into play. Ms. Haggerty said many of their students took college courses over the summer, which helped them continue their learning instead of falling behind.

The Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan has a category for mental health and emotional and social well-being. Adrienne Haggerty said there is a focus on students' internal needs and she described NOVA's tiered structure of connections. The goal is to create a circle of support and community within the larger NOVA family. Ms. Haggerty said they have small family groups in Family Class, grade-level groups, and the whole school as a community family.

Dr. Susan Garrett asked what measurement tools they are using to assess their students' learning. Adrienne Haggerty said they are administering diagnostic and benchmark tests. There are data points

from the middle of last year, December 2019, a new data point of Fall 2020, and the next data point, which will be in December 2020. They will compare where students were before school closures at the beginning of the pandemic, where students were after they returned to learning in a distance mode, and where they are after the first part of learning this school year.

Norm Lester, Board Secretary, asked how the Coachella campus is conducting daily outreach. Adrienne Haggerty said teachers pick a select group of students from each class and do daily outreach calls. They make both positive calls and calls regarding areas of concern. She said office staff and the school counselor also help make calls. Ms. Haggerty said another place of outreach for teachers is in Family Class.

Board Members commented that a lot of work went into preparing the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan, and they appreciate it. They asked Adrienne Haggerty and Regina Flores-Dunda, Principal of NOVA Academy-Santa Ana, how the teachers feel about doing daily outreach. Ms. Haggerty said she found that outreach within Family Class is very positive; teachers and students want to connect.

At the Santa Ana campus, Regina Flores-Dunda shared that she received similar feedback from teachers regarding outreach. There is time set aside in the bell schedule for teachers to make outreach calls to families. There is a system for determining who to call, when to call, and for what reason. There is also a system for elevating a concern if they are not able to reach a student.

Regina Flores-Dunda shared that the attendance rate at the Santa Ana campus remains very high at 94%. She said students are excited to come to class online. Ms. Flores-Dunda has conducted nearly 30 classroom observations, and she sees students showing up engaged. Teachers are developing high-quality lessons that promote learning from a distance. It has benefited everyone across the board to have a structured bell schedule and synchronous classes.

Regina Flores-Dunda presented NOVA Academy-Santa Ana's Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan. In the stakeholder engagement category, Ms. Flores-Dunda said they introduced the weekly Eagle family newsletter, which is one of the many ways the campus is communicating with parents. She shared that a recent newsletter provided reminders for parents to join the school site council, information about the upcoming virtual Back-to-School Night, and items to help families support their students at home during distance learning.

For in-person instructional offerings, Regina Flores-Dunda said she and her team plan to bring back students five days a week under the hybrid approach for those with the greatest need of support, such as English Language Learners and students with special needs.

Regina Flores-Dunda described the NOVA Signature Practices in the continuity of instruction category, such as standards-based learning targets, activation of prior knowledge, varied active learning

strategies, differentiated instruction, and demonstration of understanding. Each class will have a warm-up at the beginning and an "exit ticket activity" at the end.

At the Santa Ana campus, LINK was upgraded to a full ten-credit course. LINK class placement is based on the three categories of focus: English Language Learners, English Language Arts, and Mathematics. Individual student placement in LINK is based on grades and diagnostic data. The goal of providing LINK courses is to help students with remediation and acceleration. Regarding pupil and family engagement and outreach, Regina Flores-Dunda said they have a school-wide Outreach Call Log to document attendance, outreach attempts, results, and interventions.

Norm Lester asked if either campus is having issues with internet connectivity, given that so many students are using the internet simultaneously for distance learning. Ms. Flores-Dunda said there were a couple of Google outages during the past few weeks, which impacted the teachers in accessing their lessons on Google Drive. She said teachers were able to be nimble and creative. Fortunately, both campuses were proactive in purchasing hotspots with a year of data-activation for students in need of internet access. Ms. Haggerty said the hotspots are a great resource for Coachella students, although there have been issues with reliable internet due to the geographical area. She said their students are very diligent. If Zoom goes down, they will go to Google Classroom to await a new link or further instructions from their teacher.

Board Members thanked Adrienne Haggerty and Regina Flores-Dunda for their presentations and hard work in putting together their Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan. They agreed that their reports are comprehensive and written clearly.

2020-2021 EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

In the 2020-2021 Employee Handbook, Lincoln's Birthday, February 12, 2021, was removed as a school holiday. The date was previously removed from the Board-approved 2020-2021 Instructional Calendar to make room for Winter Intersession.

Dr. Susan Garrett motioned to approve the 2020-2021 Employee Handbook with the one change of removing February 12, 2021, as a school holiday.

Motion: Dr. Susan Garrett

Second: Olga Duarte

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

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:46 PM.


Norm Lester

9-15-2020