Novus SMART Academy (K-8)

October 2026 Board Meeting Agenda

Published on October 30, 2026 at 8:16 PM CDT

Date and Time

Saturday October 31, 2026 at 9:00 AM CDT

Location

La Vergne Public Library
5063 Murfreesboro Road,
La Vergne, Tennessee 37086

Agenda

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
I.	**Opening Items**			**9:00 AM**
A.	Call the Meeting to Order		Charles Frazier	
B.	Roll Call & Establishment of Quorum (5 members present in-person)		Patricia Pryor	1 m

1. **Charles Frazier, Board Chair & Governance Committee Chair**
2. **LaTarsha White, Board Vice Chair**
3. **Daniel Kadeba, Board Treasurer and Finance & Development Committee Chair**
4. **Patricia Pryor, Board Secretary**
5. **Brian Bradshaw, Board Member**

		Purpose	Presenter	Time
	6. **Tachi Lynch, Board Member** 7. **Loni Vazquez-Hall, Board Member** 8. **Others** 1. **Jeremy Sager, Founder & Executive Director** 2. **Dominique Tross, Founding Director of Operations**			
C.	Team Building Activity: Heart Behind the Mission: From Passion to Purpose (30 minutes)	Discuss	Jeremy Sager	30 m
D.	Approval of October 2026 Board Meeting Agenda	Vote	Charles Frazier	2 m
E.	Approval of Minutes from the September 2026 Board Meeting	Approve Minutes	Charles Frazier	2 m

II. Public Comment — 9:35 AM

The Novus SMART Academy (K-8) Board of Directors values community input and provides an opportunity for members of the public to address the Board during designated public comment periods at regular Board meetings. This policy establishes clear, fair, and consistent procedures to ensure public comments are conducted in an orderly, respectful, and efficient manner while allowing the Board to fulfill its governance responsibilities.

Please see our Public Comment Policy: Click Here
Please see our Public Comment Request Form: Click Here

A.	Public Comment There are currently no approved Public Comment speakers.	FYI	Charles Frazier	10 m

III. Founder & Executive Director Report — 9:45 AM

A.	How to Get Ready for Giving Tuesday **How to Get Ready for Giving Tuesday: Click Here**	FYI	Jeremy Sager	5 m
B.	Enrollment and Recruitment Updates **Enrollment Goals & Key Dates** **October 1, 2026: Novus begins its enrollment push.**	FYI	Jeremy Sager	5 m

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January 2027: Rutherford County Schools officially begins its enrollment period.
CSGF Seed Goals
50% of budgeted enrollment by March 31, 2027 (84 scholars)
Kindergarten: 36
1st Grade: 24
2nd Grade: 24
65% of budgeted enrollment by April 30, 2027 (111 scholars)
Kindergarten: 47
1st Grade: 32
2nd Grade: 32
80% of budgeted enrollment by May 31, 2027 (136 scholars)
Kindergarten: 58
1st Grade: 39
2nd Grade: 39
95% of budgeted enrollment by August 2, 2027 (161 scholars)
Kindergarten: 69
1st Grade: 46
2nd Grade: 46
Lagging Indicator: 95% of scholars remain enrolled in August 2028.
Enrollment & Recruitment Focus: Enrollment and recruitment efforts continue with an increased emphasis on targeted community outreach, family engagement, and converting interested families into enrolled scholars.
Reengagement with Mariposa Consulting Group
Mariposa Consulting Group: Click Here
Biweekly check-ins on Wednesdays at 9:00 AM CT.
Partnership Hub: Click Here
Targeted Community Outreach Strategy: Outreach efforts have been reset to prioritize partnerships and direct engagement with organizations serving families with young children, including:
Early childhood education facilities.
Preschools
Pediatric facilities and providers.
Other community organizations serving families with young children.

1. Kiwanis Cookie Train & Free Santa Photo: Novus will participate in the community event on Tuesday, December 1 at 5:00 PM CT.
    1. **Dominique Tross and Jeremy Sager will arrive for setup at 2:00 PM CT.**

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2. **Participation will provide an additional opportunity to increase Novus' visibility, engage families, and strengthen community relationships.**

Family Information Sessions
Virtual Information Sessions
2nd Tuesdays at 10:00 AM CT
4th Thursdays at 6:00 PM CT
In-person information sessions will begin once Novus has full access to its facility.
Social Media & Digital Presence Reset: Novus is strengthening its digital presence to increase brand awareness, family engagement, and enrollment interest through:
Facebook
Instagram
LinkedIn
The SMART Scoop Monthly Newsletter

C.	Staffing and Talent Updates	FYI	Jeremy Sager	5 m

1. **CSGF Seed Goals**
    1. **Hiring Goals**
        1. **100% of leadership roles filled by January 2027.**
        2. **25% of open positions filled by February 2027.**
        3. **50% of open positions filled by March 2027.**
        4. **75% of open positions by May 2027.**
    2. **Staff re-Commitment Goal: 80% of staff invited to return have signed agreements for upcoming school year by March.**
    3. **Lagging Indicator: 85% fall-to-fall staff retention.**
2. **October 1 Talent Recruitment Launch**
    1. **We launched our 2027-2028 talent recruitment campaign on October 1, 2026.**
    2. **All open positions are posted on our website and actively marketed on our social media platforms:**
        1. **Board Members (immediate openings)**
        2. **Founding Dean of Academics & Scholar Access**
        3. **Founding Dean of School Culture & Community Engagement**
        4. **K-2 GenEd Teacher (7)**
        5. **Teacher-in-Residence (1)**
        6. **Education Assistant (2)**
        7. **Physical Education Teacher (1)**

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8. **School Counselor & MTSS Coordinator (1)**
9. **Special Education Teacher (2)**
10. **ESL Teacher (2)**
11. **Office Manager**

3. **School Leadership Recruitment**
    1. **Recruitment and candidate management for the remaining founding leadership positions continue to be a priority.**
    2. **Candidate pipelines and progress will be actively tracked to identify leaders who demonstrate strong alignment with Novus' mission, vision, academic model, and founding culture.**
4. **Educator Recruitment & Selection Priorities: Novus' primary talent priority is recruiting, selecting, and retaining educators who demonstrate:**
    1. **Strong professional and growth mindsets.**
    2. **Alignment with Novus' mission and vision.**
    3. **High expectations for all scholars.**
    4. **Commitment to academic excellence and continuous improvement.**
    5. **Commitment to establishing and sustaining Novus' founding culture.**
5. **University & Educator Pipeline Development**
    1. **Novus is expanding its educator pipeline through partnerships and outreach to regional universities and educator preparation programs.**
    2. **Job postings and recruitment information have been shared with:**
        1. **Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU)**
        2. **Lipscomb University**
        3. **Austin Peay State University (APSU)**
        4. **Tennessee State University (TSU)**
        5. **Trevecca Nazarene University**
        6. **Belmont University**
        7. **Vanderbilt University**
        8. **Cumberland University**

D.	Academic Planning, Performance & Instructional Updates		Jeremy Sager	5 m

1. **CSGF Seed Goals**
    1. **Draft Curriculum Map & Vision of Excellence (July-September): Click Here**
    2. **Draft Hiring Process & Guides (September-October): Click Here**
    3. **Final Curriculum Map & Vision of Excellence (September-December): Click Here**

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4. **Summer Professional LEarning & Development Schedule & Goals Drafted: Click Here**
5. **Schoolwide Expectations & COnsistent Classroom Routines Documented: Click Here**
6. **Minute-by-Minute Plans for Whole School Times, Behavior & Removal Systems Drafted: Click Here**

2. **Student Growth Goal**
    1. **Novus will score at/above the 60th percentile for conditional growth on mid-year and end-of-year NWEA MAP Growth or another nationally normed assessment.**
    2. **Simply put: We want Novus scholars to demonstrate stronger academic growth than typical students with similar starting achievement levels.**
    3. **A 60th percentile conditional growth result means the school's growth performance is higher than approximately 60% of comparable growth outcomes.**
3. **Student Achievement Goal**
    1. **Novus will meet or exceed the national average on NWEA MAP Growth or another nationally normed assessment.**
    2. **Simply put: We want our scholars, on average, to perform at least as well as students nationally in the subjects assessed.**
    3. **Over time, this supports Novus' broader goal of ensuring scholars remain on track for college and career readiness.**
4. **The easiest way to distinguish the two goals:**
    1. **Growth = How much are our scholars learning?**
    2. **Achievement = Where are our scholars performing compared with students nationally?**
    3. **Together, the goals mean Novus is accountable for both accelerating student learning and helping scholars reach strong levels of academic achievement.**

E.	Facilities & Finance Updates		Jeremy Sager	5 m

1. **CSGF Seed Goals**
    1. **Secure signed LOI (September-October)**
    2. **Enter lease negotiations with contingency secured. (November-December)**
    3. **Secure signed or contingency locked. (January-February)**
    4. **Secure an affordable facility and sign a lease by February 15, 2027.**

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5. **Maintain a minimum of 60 days of cash on hand to ensure sufficient liquidity to meet operating expenses and support long-term financial sustainability.**

2. **Matter Real Estate Tracker: Click Here**

F. Grants Updates — Jeremy Sager — 5 m

1. **Securing Grants Updates: Click Here**
2. **Appropriations Committee in Congress in Tennessee that Supports Charter Schools: Click Here**

G. Required Board Trainings — Jeremy Sager — 5 m

1. As part of our ongoing governance responsibilities and preparation for the 2026-2027 school year, all Novus SMART Academy Board members must complete the applicable board training.
2. Please use the link below to register for and complete the currently available training: https://tcscmembershipportal.thinkific.com/products/courses/copy-of-2025-26-returning-board-member-training
3. **Important Notes:**
    1. **Returning Board Members:** Please register and complete the available training modules.

1. **New Board Members:** Please also register under **"Returning Members"** for now and complete the modules currently available. **There are currently 4 modules to complete.**
2. Two additional courses specifically for new board members are being uploaded. Once those are available, Kim West from the Tennessee Charter School Center will send the additional link and instructions to the members who need to complete them.
3. Please prioritize completing the currently available training as soon as possible. This training is an important part of ensuring that our Board remains informed, compliant, and prepared to govern Novus effectively as we move toward our August 2027 opening.

IV. Academic Excellence Committee Report — 10:20 AM

		Purpose	Presenter	Time

Committee Meeting Objective: To ensure that Novus SMART Academy's academic model is fully defined, measurable, and executable in preparation for its August 2027 opening, while strengthening the Board's capacity to provide effective academic oversight. The Committee focused on school leadership recruitment, enrollment readiness, academic performance expectations, scholar support systems, and long-term academic growth.

A.	Key Takeaways and Next Steps	Discuss	LaTarsha White	10 m

1. **School Leadership Recruitment**

The Committee reviewed recruitment efforts for the Founding Dean of Academics & Scholar Access and Founding Dean of School Culture & Community Partnerships. Continued emphasis will be placed on identifying highly qualified leaders who align with Novus SMART Academy's mission, academic model, and commitment to scholar success. The Committee also discussed strengthening Board membership, including the recruitment of founding parent representation.

1. **Enrollment Readiness and Recruitment**

The Committee reviewed the Family Recruitment & Enrollment Annual Plan and established enrollment milestones for the 2027–2028 school year. Novus plans to enroll 168 founding scholars across Kindergarten (72), First Grade (48), and Second Grade (48). Enrollment targets include:

1. **50% of budgeted enrollment by March 31, 2027 (84 scholars)**
2. **65% of budgeted enrollment by April 30, 2027 (111 scholars)**
3. **80% of budgeted enrollment by May 31, 2027 (136 scholars)**
4. **95% of budgeted enrollment by August 2, 2027 (161 scholars)**
5. **The Committee emphasized expanding partnerships with early childhood centers, hosting family information sessions, and strengthening community-based recruitment throughout La Vergne and Smyrna. Recruitment efforts will prioritize authentic family relationships, community trust, and alignment with the school's intended student population.**

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1. **Academic and Operational Systems**

The Committee received updates regarding Cariina and discussed the importance of establishing reliable systems for school operations, student information, and academic accountability before opening.

1. **Committee Operations and Effectiveness**

The Committee identified opportunities to strengthen its effectiveness through advance distribution of meeting materials, assigned pre-reading, improved meeting pacing, and consistent communication and accountability.

Through intentional planning, collaborative leadership, and data-informed decision-making, the Committee remains committed to ensuring that Novus SMART Academy delivers an extraordinary learning experience where college and career begin in Kindergarten.

V. Finance & Development Committee Report — 10:30 AM

Committee Meeting Objective: To strengthen the effectiveness, accountability, financial literacy, and long-term capacity of the Novus SMART Academy Board of Directors through intentional Board recruitment, candidate evaluation, strategic committee placement, and improved governance practices.

An additional priority was to deepen Board leadership's understanding of the Academy's operating budget through a comprehensive review and engagement with Vertex Education, the school's back-office financial services partner. This work is intended to ensure that Board members are equipped to exercise informed financial oversight, understand the assumptions driving the budget, and make responsible decisions as the Academy prepares to open in August 2027.

A. Key Takeaways and Next Steps — Daniel Kadeba — 10 m

Board Effectiveness and Meeting Accountability
The discussion identified opportunities to improve Board meeting efficiency, including punctuality, preparation, adherence to meeting schedules, and completion of assigned

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responsibilities. Dr. Sager acknowledged the need for stronger meeting preparation and operational efficiency. Loni Vazquez-Hall emphasized balancing flexibility for members' personal circumstances with professional accountability and respect for everyone's time.

Next Steps: Reinforce expectations for advance review of meeting materials, timely attendance, active participation, and consistent follow-through on assigned action items.

Board Giving and Engagement Expectations
The Finance & Development Committee will reinforce the established annual Board fundraising goal of $50,000 and individual $4,000 Give/Get commitment. We will participate in the proposed cultivation strategy by identifying approximately 10 potential funders, donors, corporate partners, or strategic contacts within their networks. These expectations should be incorporated into Board recruitment, onboarding, and ongoing accountability.

Comprehensive Budget Review and Engagement with Vertex Education
Board and school leadership met with Vertex Education, Novus SMART Academy's back-office financial services partner, to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the Academy's budget, financial projections, and the assumptions underlying its pre-opening and initial operating costs. The budget review emphasized the importance of moving beyond reviewing financial figures in isolation to understanding how individual budget components interact and affect the Academy's overall financial position. Areas of focus included:
Revenue and Funding Assumptions: Understanding projected funding sources, anticipated revenue, and the relationship between enrollment projections and financial sustainability.
Personnel and Benefits: Examining anticipated staffing expenditures, compensation, benefits, and the financial implications of the Academy's instructional and operational staffing model.
Facilities and Startup Expenditures: Understanding how lease costs, required improvements, and other facility-related obligations influence available resources.

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Instructional and Operational Investments: Reviewing budget considerations associated with curriculum, technology, contracted services, instructional materials, and school operations.
Cash Flow and Financial Sustainability: Developing a clearer understanding of anticipated expenditures, financial obligations, and the importance of maintaining sufficient resources throughout the pre-opening and initial operating periods.
Budget Monitoring and Accountability: Strengthening the Board's ability to interpret financial reports, identify variances, ask informed questions, and monitor financial performance.

This engagement reinforced the importance of ensuring that Board members understand not only what is included in the budget, but also why expenditures are necessary, how projections were developed, and what financial risks or adjustments may arise as the school approaches opening.

Next Steps: Continue engaging Vertex Education in financial reviews and appropriate Board work sessions. Strengthen Board members' financial literacy and ensure that significant budget assumptions, changes, and financial risks are communicated clearly before major decisions are made.

B. Board Member Recommendation & Vote — Vote — Daniel Kadeba — 5 m

Margertha Artis completed her final capacity interview for consideration to join the Novus SMART Academy (K-8) Board of Directors on Monday, 10/12 at 4:00 PM CT. Throughout the interview, she demonstrated strong alignment with the Academy’s mission and vision, particularly its emphasis on early childhood education, foundational academic skills, and preparing scholars for long-term success.

Margertha brings valuable experience in nonprofit governance, strategic planning, philanthropy, and fundraising. She has previously served on finance and philanthropic committees, supported fundraising initiatives, assisted with gala planning, secured philanthropic contributions, and written a successful $27,000 grant. She also shared her involvement in a recent fundraising effort that generated $52,000 in donations. She expressed a clear understanding of financial accountability, organizational sustainability, and the importance of cultivating long-term donor relationships.

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Additionally, Margertha demonstrated an understanding of the distinction between governance and management, emphasizing strategic planning, accountability, delegation, and ethical leadership. She affirmed her willingness to fulfill the Board's annual $4,000 Give/Get commitment and actively support the Launch27: Built to Last fundraising campaign.

While Margertha maintains several professional and personal commitments, she expressed confidence in her ability to contribute meaningfully through strategic engagement, committee participation, and completing assigned responsibilities.

Overall Assessment and Recommendation: Interview feedback was positive, with no significant concerns identified. Margertha appears to be a strong prospective Board member whose experience and expertise would be particularly valuable to the Finance & Development Committee. Her background in philanthropy, financial oversight, and strategic development aligns with the Academy's immediate fundraising priorities and long-term sustainability goals. I move that the Board of Directors of Novus SMART Academy (K-8) vote to advance Margertha's candidacy for Board consideration, with particular emphasis on her potential contributions to Finance & Development.

VI. Governance Committee Report — 10:45 AM

Committee Meeting Objective: The Governance Committee convened to review prospective Board member candidates, strengthen Board recruitment and onboarding processes, monitor facilities developments, review governance policies and personnel procedures, and ensure continued alignment with Novus SMART Academy's mission, strategic priorities, and organizational readiness for its August 2027 opening.

A.	Key Takeaways and Next Steps		Charles Frazier	11 m

1. **Board Member Recruitment and Recommendations. The Committee reviewed three prospective Board members who completed final capacity interviews on October 12, 2026. All three demonstrated strong alignment with the Academy's mission, vision, and expectations for Board service. All three candidates affirmed their willingness to support the Board's annual $4,000 Give/Get commitment and the Launch27: Built to Last fundraising campaign.**

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Next Step: Present candidates for Board consideration and potential appointment during the October 31, 2026, Board meeting.

1. **Board Member Onboarding and Committee Structure**
    1. **Tachi Lynch received her Board of Directors Orientation Checklist on October 12, 2026, and is progressing through onboarding.**
    2. **The Committee reviewed anticipated Board membership, committee assignments, and staggered director terms as follows:**
    3. **The Academic Excellence Committee Chair and position is vacant.**
    4. **Founding-parent representation is also a recruitment priority.**
    5. **The Finance & Development Committee position is vacant.**

Next Step: Continue onboarding newly appointed directors, confirm committee assignments, and address outstanding Board leadership and membership needs.

1. **Facilities and School Opening Readiness**
    1. **The school is advancing the request-for-proposals process for the required traffic study.**
    2. **Alarm vendors conducted a walkthrough on October 20, 2026, to assess facility life-safety requirements.**
    3. **Lease negotiations remain ongoing pending completion and presentation of the required scope of work.**

Next Step: Continue monitoring facilities milestones and provide updates to the Board regarding developments that may affect the August 2027 opening timeline.

1. **Employee Handbook and Personnel Policies. Board Chair Attorney Charles Frazier completed a legal and governance-focused review of the Employee Handbook and provided recommendations. Dr. Jeremy Sager and Dominique Tross incorporated the proposed revisions.**

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Next Step: Present the revised Employee Handbook and Personnel Policies to the Governance Committee during its November 2026 work session for further review before advancing the document for Board consideration.

1. **Governance Policies and Compliance. The Committee reaffirmed its ongoing review of foundational governance documents, including the Bylaws, Conflict of Interest Policy, Code of Conduct, Open Meetings Policy, Public Comment Policy, and Board Norms and Expectations. Next Step: Continue reviewing policies for alignment with Tennessee public charter school requirements, authorizer expectations, and effective nonprofit governance practices.**

B.	Board Member Recommendation & Vote: Dr. Debbie Hayes	Vote	Charles Frazier	2 m

Dr. Debbie Hayes completed her final capacity interview for consideration to join the Novus SMART Academy (K-8) Board of Directors on Monday, 10/12 at 6:00 PM CT. Throughout the interview, she demonstrated strong alignment with our mission, vision, and core values, particularly its commitment to early educational preparation, character development, and providing all scholars with opportunities for long-term success.

Dr. Hayes brings more than 25 years of experience in education, along with a doctoral background in leadership and research. She emphasized her strengths in community engagement, relationship building, organizational leadership, and financial advancement. Her experience includes fundraising and networking at Meharry, grant-writing training through Tennessee State University, and community organizing and fundraising through organizations such as NOAH and Prince Hall. She expressed enthusiasm for leveraging her existing professional relationships to secure financial support, pursue grant opportunities, and strengthen our community presence.

Additionally, Dr. Hayes demonstrated an understanding of the Board's fiduciary responsibilities, emphasizing financial sustainability, compliance, transparency, and ethical leadership. She expressed a results-oriented approach to governance, highlighting the importance of accountability, data-informed decision-making, and maintaining productive relationships despite differences in perspective. She also affirmed her willingness to fulfill the Board's annual $4,000 Give/Get commitment and

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support the Launch27: Built to Last fundraising campaign through personal contributions and outreach to her professional and personal networks.

Regarding Board responsibilities, Dr. Hayes expressed confidence in her ability to meet the expected time commitment with advance scheduling. She also demonstrated an appreciation for the challenges associated with launching a new school and emphasized her commitment to advancing our mission through collaboration, integrity, and measurable results.

Overall Assessment and Recommendation: Dr. Hayes presents as a mission-aligned prospective Board member with substantial educational experience, established community relationships, and a strong interest in fundraising and organizational sustainability. Her background could provide valuable support to the Governance Committee, while also supporting donor cultivation, grant development, community partnerships, and long-term financial planning as a Board member. I move that the Board of Directors of Novus SMART Academy (K-8) vote to advance Dr. Hayes's candidacy for Board consideration, with particular emphasis on her potential contributions to the Governance Committee.

C.	Board Member Recommendation & Vote: Lisa Smith-Watson	Vote	Charles Frazier	2 m

Lisa Smith-Watson completed her final capacity interview for consideration to join the Novus SMART Academy (K-8) Board of Directors on Monday, 10/12 at 7:00 PM CT. Throughout the interview, she demonstrated strong alignment with our mission and vision, particularly its emphasis on early educational preparation, college and career exploration, and establishing a strong academic foundation for scholars beginning in Kindergarten.

Lisa brings professional experience in organizational management, learning and development, strategic planning, communication, and relationship building. She emphasized the importance of evaluating organizational effectiveness, identifying barriers to success, and establishing measurable outcomes to determine whether programs and initiatives are achieving their intended results. She also highlighted her experience serving on the Middle Tennessee State University Health and Science Advisory Board, where she has supported student recruitment for internships and career development opportunities.

Regarding fundraising and financial development, Lisa shared experience supporting church building campaigns and leveraging corporate relationships to secure resources

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for organizational events. While she acknowledged that her fundraising experience is not extensive, she expressed confidence in her ability to engage community partners, vendors, and professional networks to support the Academy's financial priorities. She affirmed her willingness to fulfill the Board's annual $4,000 Give/Get commitment and contribute to the Launch27: Built to Last fundraising campaign.

Additionally, Lisa demonstrated a commitment to organizational accountability, transparency, and mission-driven decision-making. She emphasized the importance of sustainable family partnerships, consistent communication, and ensuring that Board decisions prioritize the well-being of scholars, families, and staff. Her approach to governance reflects a strong interest in evaluating organizational effectiveness, monitoring outcomes, and supporting long-term organizational sustainability.

Regarding Board responsibilities, Lisa indicated that she could accommodate Saturday Board meetings and expressed interest in reviewing the Academy's curriculum and instructional systems to ensure alignment between strategic goals and implementation.

Overall Assessment and Recommendation: Lisa presents as a mission-aligned prospective Board member with valuable expertise in organizational development, strategic planning, performance measurement, and stakeholder engagement. Her professional background could be particularly beneficial to the Governance Committee, where her strengths in program evaluation, instructional alignment, and continuous improvement would support our academic priorities. While she has some fundraising experience, her strongest contributions appear to be in organizational effectiveness and academic accountability. The recommendation is to continue consideration of her candidacy, with further clarification of her capacity to meet the full monthly Board time commitment and contribute to fundraising and governance responsibilities. I move that the Board of Directors of Novus SMART Academy (K-8) vote to advance Lisa’s candidacy for Board consideration, with particular emphasis on her potential contributions to the Governance Committee.

VII. Ongoing Business — 11:00 AM

A.	Policies & Procedures	Discuss	Charles Frazier	25 m

1. **Review of Board of Directors Annual Calendar:** Click Here
2. **Review of Open Meetings Law Policy:** Click Here
3. **Review of Bylaws:** Click Here

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1. **Code of Conduct Policy: Click Here**
2. **Conflict of Interest Policy: Click Here**
3. **Confidentiality Policy Draft: Click Here**

VIII. Closing Items — 11:25 AM

A.	Adjourn Meeting	Vote		
B.	Closing Reflections & Adjournment	FYI	Charles Frazier	5 m

Coversheet

Approval of Minutes from the September 2026 Board Meeting

Section:	I. Opening Items
Item:	E. Approval of Minutes from the September 2026 Board Meeting
Purpose:	Approve Minutes
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Minutes for September 2026 Board Meeting on September 26, 2026

APPROVED

Novus SMART Academy (K-8)

Minutes

September 2026 Board Meeting

Date and Time
Saturday September 26, 2026 at 9:00 AM

Location
Frazier Law Office
5258 Murfreesboro Road
La Vergne, Tennessee 37086

Public Virtual Link : https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87062860772?pwd=NFGbW0MAcPwLOgbMoOORvYG0ssNKwZ.1&jst=2

Directors Present
Brian Bradshaw, Christian Hill, Daniel Kadeba, Dexter Peterson, Loni Vazquez-Hall

Directors Absent
Charles Frazier, LaTarsha White, Patricia Pryor

Ex Officio Members Present
Dominique Tross (remote), Jeremy Sager

I. Opening Items

A. Roll Call & Establishment of Quorum

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Daniel Kadeba called a meeting of the board of directors of Novus SMART Academy (K-8) to order on Saturday Sep 26, 2026 at 9:22 AM.

C. Approval of September 2026 Board Meeting Agenda

D. Approval of Minutes from the August 2026 Board Meeting

II. Founder & Executive Director Report

A. Enrollment and Recruitment Updates

4 Goals:

Dr Sager talks about the goal. 80% by Aug
85% by Oct 31st
Lagging indicator, as we go to Aug 28, we have to maintain 95%

We have reengage with Meroposal, consulting group helping with enrollment.
Putting together metrics for 2 Zip codes, Laverne and Smyrna,
Bi-weekly meetings in place.

Staffing:

Hiring goal, by June 15, 2027, should have filled 80% of our entire positions.
Staff Commitment: 80% of staff who are invited return have signed their
Lagging Indicator : 80% retention rate
Jobs descriptions are being pushed out soon
Conference for charter school center, Jeremy and Tross attended

Academic Performance:
-Student Growth: Score above 60th Percentile
-**Reengagement with Mariposa Consulting Group**
Facilities:
-CGF , Facility and signed lease by March 2027
Pretty close. State fire marshall report came back
Traffic Study.
Those 2 will dictacte

Meeting with Hope Financial Credit Union on Oct 8th

Grants:
We received BES Scholarship covers the entire follow on support - $45K
We did not received the start up Grants for ~$50k

4 Goals:

CSGF Seed Goals
80% of budgeted enrollment by April 30, 2027 (136 scholars)
Kindergarten: 58
1st Grade: 39
2nd Grade: 39
85% of budgeted enrollment by October 31, 2027 (144 scholars)
Kindergarten: 62
1st Grade: 41
2nd Grade: 41
Lagging Indicator: 95% of scholars remain enrolled in August 2028.

Staffing and Talent Updates

1. **CSGF Seed Goals**
    1. **Hiring Goal: Hire 80% of open positions by June 15, 2027.**
    2. **Staff Commitment Goal: 80% of staff invited to return have signed agreements for Year 2 by April 1 of the applicable renewal year.**
    3. **Lagging Indicator: Achieve 85% fall-to-fall staff retention.**

    Academic Performance & Instructional Updates
2. **CSGF Seed Goals**
    1. **Student Growth Goal: Novus will score at or above the 60th percentile for conditional growth on mid-year and end-of-year NWEA MAP Growth or another nationally normed assessment.**
        1. **Simply put: We want Novus scholars to demonstrate stronger academic growth than typical students with similar starting achievement levels.**
        2. **A 60th percentile conditional growth result means the school's growth performance is higher than approximately 60% of comparable growth outcomes.**
    2. **Student Achievement Goal: Novus will meet or exceed the national average on NWEA MAP Growth or another nationally normed assessment.**
        1. **Simply put: We want our scholars, on average, to perform at least as well as students nationally in the subjects assessed.**
        2. **Over time, this supports Novus' broader goal of ensuring scholars remain on track for college and career readiness.**
    3. **The easiest way to distinguish the two goals:**
        1. **Growth = How much are our scholars learning?**
        2. **Achievement = Where are our scholars performing compared with students nationally?**

3. **Together, the goals mean Novus is accountable for both accelerating student learning and helping scholars reach strong levels of academic achievement.**

Facilities & Finance Updates

3. **CSGF Seed Goals**
    1. **Secure an affordable facility and sign a lease by March 1, 2027.**
    2. **Maintain a minimum of 60 days of cash on hand to ensure sufficient liquidity to meet operating expenses and support long-term financial sustainability.**

B. Staffing and Talent Updates

C. Academic Performance & Instructional Updates

Met on 9/19
Focus on Academic Model, Leadership Structure, and Staffing approach.
ReqS for Founding Dean of School Culture, and Founding Dean of Academic
Outreach to Colleges and Universities
Determine a Founding Parent
Working for a line by line budget true up. Hire our own employees vs Teach Start.(~$75k savings)

D. Facilities & Finance Updates

9/2
Start Up Grants - Not awarded but follow on ~$45k
Banking Access/ International
New Board Member approval. Need quorum

The school-based leadership team has established a regular cadence of meetings with Ben Crowe and Wendy Butler at Vertex Education, Novus SMART Academy's back-office financial services partner.

Budget assumptions and projections;

1. **Cash flow and account balances;**
2. **Personnel and benefits costs;**
3. **Vendor and contractual expenses;**
4. **Outstanding and anticipated payments;**
5. **Facility-related expenditures; and**
6. **Other financial considerations associated with the pre-opening year.**

Budget True-Up

1. **On Friday, September 25, 2026, the school-based leadership team will spend dedicated time with Ben Crowe and Wendy Butler of Vertex Education to true-up the budget using the most accurate and current figures available.**

Board Candidate Recommendation: Tachi Lynch

1. The Finance & Development Committee recommends Tachi Lynch for appointment to the Novus SMART Academy Board of Directors.

Priorities for the Next Reporting Period: The Finance & Development Committee and school leadership will prioritize the following work before the next reporting period:

1. Complete the budget true-up with Vertex Education and incorporate the most accurate personnel, benefits, vendor, programmatic, and facilities assumptions.
2. Continue strengthening financial systems and internal controls, including banking access, purchasing processes, approval structures, and financial reporting.
3. Refine facility-related budget projections as lease terms, required improvements, and other occupancy costs become clearer.
4. Monitor Novus's overall financial position, including cash, outstanding obligations, projected expenditures, grant funding, and budget-to-actual performance.
5. Advance the $50,000 annual Board fundraising goal and establish clear tracking and accountability for individual $4,000 give/get commitments.
6. Launch the Board cultivation exercise, with each Board member identifying approximately 10 prospective funders, donors, corporate partners, philanthropic contacts, or strategic relationships from within their networks.
7. Develop a coordinated cultivation strategy for Board-generated prospects, including identifying appropriate Board introductions and determining when prospects are ready for engagement, partnership conversations, or solicitation.
8. Determine next steps regarding Dun & Bradstreet based on organizational need, anticipated value, and cost.
9. Transition Finance & Development Committee leadership following Chris Hill's October 1st departure and, subject to Board approval, establish Daniel Kadeba as Committee Chair.
10. Continue building Finance and Development capacity through Board recruitment, onboarding, committee assignments, and clarification of the long-term committee structure.

To ensure continuity following Chris Hill's departure, it is proposed that Daniel Kadeba, Board Treasurer, be appointed Chair of the Finance & Development Committee effective October 10, 2026.

Meeting with Securing Grants . Launch 27

E. Grants Updates

F. Required Board Trainings

III. Governance Committee Report

A. Board Member Recruitment and Selection

The Governance Committee convened on 9/15 to review key governance and organizational matters in preparation for the September 2026 Board of Directors meeting. The Committee's work focused on Board recruitment, governance policies and procedures, the Executive Director's conflict-of-interest disclosure, facilities progress, Board member orientation, the Employee Handbook, and ongoing governance priorities as Novus SMART Academy prepares for its August 2027 opening.

The Committee reaffirmed the Board's priority areas for recruitment, including:

- **Academic Excellence:** One (1) additional member, preferably a Founding Parent with experience in student recruitment, enrollment, education, or charter school advocacy.
- **Finance:** Two (2) additional members with strong financial expertise.
- **Development:** Three (3) additional members, including individuals with fundraising, community engagement, and/or public charter school funding experience.
- **Governance:** One (1) additional member to strengthen governance capacity. Complete board training: 4 Videos

Conflict of Interest Review
Dr. Jeremy Sager initially discussed a potential conflict-of-interest concern with Board Chair Charles Frazier on September 14, 2026, followed by written communication to the Board Officers of Novus SMART Academy on September 15, 2026.

Board of Directors Orientation and Onboarding

- The Committee reviewed the **Board of Directors Orientation Checklist** and discussed strengthening the onboarding experience for incoming Board members:

B. Conflict of Interest Review

C. Board of Directors Orientation and Onboarding

D. Recommendation to the Board

E. Employee Handbook Review

F. Governance Policies and Compliance

G. Governance Priorities for the Planning Year

H. <Critical Reminder> Required Board Trainings

IV. Other Business

A. Board Member Resignation Updates

B. Board Candidates Updates

C. Review of Board of Directors Annual Calendar

D. Ongoing Review of Bylaws

Bylaws review and discussion has been tabled until more members are present

V. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 10:41 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Daniel Kadeba