



Novus SMART Academy (K-8) September 2026 Board Meeting Agenda

Date: Saturday, September 26, 2026

Time: 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM CT

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

BoardOnTrack (members only platform): <https://app2.boardontrack.com/login/auth>

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

Recording: Provided at the completion of the Board meeting.

Novus SMART Academy (K-8) Mission & Vision Statements

Mission Statement

Novus SMART Academy (K-8) provides scholars with an extraordinary learning experience, where college and career begin in Kindergarten.

Vision Statement

Novus SMART Academy (K-8) produces global achievers through high-quality academic instruction and character development, with a relentless drive for success in life.

Agenda

I. Opening Items (5 minutes)

- A. Call to Order by Board Vice Chair LaTarsha White
- B. Roll Call & Establishment of Quorum (6 members present in-person) by Board Treasurer Daniel Kadeba
 - 1. Charles Frazier, Board Chair & Governance Committee Chair - Absent
 - 2. LaTarsha White, Board Vice Chair - Absent
 - 3. Daniel Kadeba, Board Treasurer and Finance & Development Committee Chair - Present
 - 4. Patricia Pryor, Board Secretary - Absent
 - 5. Brian Bradshaw, Board Member - Present
 - 6. Chris Hill, Board Member - Present
 - 7. Dexter Peterson, Academic Excellence Committee Chair - Present
 - 8. Loni Vazquez-Hall, Board Member - Present
- 9. Others
 - a) Jeremy Sager, Founder & Executive Director - Present
 - b) Dominique Tross, Founding Director of Operations - Virtual
- C. Approval of September 2026 Board Meeting Agenda by Board Vice Chair LaTarsha White
- D. Approval of Minutes from the August 2026 Board Meeting by Board Chair Charles Frazier: [Click Here](#)

II. Public Comment Facilitated by Board Vice Chair LaTarsha White (10 minutes)

III. Founder & Executive Director's Report by Dr. Jeremy Sager (15 minutes)

IV. Committee Reports Facilitated by Board Vice Chair LaTarsha White (45 minutes)

- A. The Academic Excellence Committee Report by Committee Chair Dr. Dexter Peterson.
- B. The Finance Committee Report by Board Treasurer and Finance & Development Committee Chair Daniel Kadeba.
- C. The Governance Committee Report by Board Chair Charles Frazier.



V. Other Business

- A. Board Member Resignation Updates
 - 1. Barton Audate on April 23, 2026
 - 2. Tatyana Polite on June 10, 2026
 - 3. Chris Hill on September 30, 2026
- B. Board Candidates Updates (link removed intentionally)
- C. Review of Board of Directors Annual Calendar: [Click Here](#)
- D. Ongoing Review of Bylaws: [Click Here](#)

VI. Closing Items (5 minutes)

- A. Closing Reflections & Adjournment

VII. Board Candidates Interviews (after Board meeting)

Founder & Executive Director's Report by Dr. Jeremy Sager (15 minutes)

Enrollment and Recruitment Updates

- 1. Enrollment Goals & Key Dates
 - a. October 1, 2026: Novus begins its enrollment push.
 - b. January 2027: Rutherford County Schools officially begins its enrollment period.
- 2. CSGF Seed Goals
 - a. 80% of budgeted enrollment by April 30, 2027 (136 scholars)
 - i. Kindergarten: 58
 - ii. 1st Grade: 39
 - iii. 2nd Grade: 39
 - b. 85% of budgeted enrollment by October 31, 2027 (144 scholars)
 - i. Kindergarten: 62
 - ii. 1st Grade: 41
 - iii. 2nd Grade: 41
 - c. Lagging Indicator: 95% of scholars remain enrolled in August 2028.
- 3. 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.
- 4. Reengagement with Mariposa Consulting Group
 - a. Reengaging Mariposa Consulting Group to strengthen enrollment strategy and execution.
 - b. Biweekly check-ins on Wednesdays at 9:00 AM CT.
 - c. Partnership Hub: [Click Here](#)
 - d. Mariposa Consulting Group: [Click Here](#)
- 5. Targeted Community Outreach Strategy: Outreach efforts have been reset to prioritize partnerships and direct engagement with organizations serving families with young children, including:
 - a. Early childhood education facilities.
 - b. Preschools
 - c. Pediatric facilities and providers.
 - d. Other community organizations serving families with young children.
 - e. Kiwanis Cookie Train & Free Santa Photo: Novus will participate in the community event on Tuesday, December 1 at 5:00 PM CT.
 - i. Dominique Tross and Jeremy Sager will arrive for setup at 2:00 PM CT.
 - ii. Participation will provide an additional opportunity to increase Novus' visibility, engage families, and strengthen community relationships.
- 6. Family Information Sessions
 - a. Virtual Information Sessions
 - i. 2nd Tuesdays at 10:00 AM CT
 - ii. 4th Thursdays at 6:00 PM CT



- b. In-person information sessions will begin once Novus has full access to its facility.
- 7. Social Media & Digital Presence Reset: Novus is strengthening its digital presence to increase brand awareness, family engagement, and enrollment interest through:
 - a. Facebook
 - b. Instagram
 - c. LinkedIn
 - d. The SMART Scoop Monthly Newsletter

Staffing and Talent Updates

1. CSGF Seed Goals

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

2. October 1 Talent Recruitment Launch

- a. Novus will officially launch its comprehensive 2027-2028 talent recruitment campaign on October 1, 2026.
- b. All open positions will be posted and actively marketed beginning October 1, including:
 - i. Board Members (6)
 - ii. Founding Dean of Academics & Scholar Access
 - iii. Founding Dean of School Culture & Community Engagement
 - iv. K-2 GenEd Teachers (7)
 - v. Teachers-in-Residence (11)
 - vi. Physical Education Teacher (1)
 - vii. School Counselor & MTSS Coordinator (1)
 - viii. Exceptional Education Teachers for Students with Disabilities (2)
 - ix. Multilanguage Teachers for English Learners (2)
 - x. Office Manager

3. School Leadership Recruitment

- a. Recruitment and candidate management for the remaining founding leadership positions continue to be a priority.
- b. 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:

- a. Strong professional and growth mindsets.
- b. Alignment with Novus' mission and vision.
- c. High expectations for all scholars.
- d. Commitment to academic excellence and continuous improvement.
- e. Commitment to establishing and sustaining Novus' founding culture.

5. University & Educator Pipeline Development

- a. Novus is expanding its educator pipeline through partnerships and outreach to regional universities and educator preparation programs.
- b. Job postings and recruitment information have been shared with:
 - i. Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU)
 - ii. Lipscomb University
 - iii. Austin Peay State University (APSU)
 - iv. Tennessee State University (TSU)
 - v. Trevecca Nazarene University
 - vi. Belmont University
 - vii. Vanderbilt University
 - viii. Cumberland University



Academic Performance & Instructional Updates

1. CSGF Seed Goals

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

2. Curriculum Selection & Academic Alignment

- a. Novus has selected TDOE-approved, high-quality instructional materials and continues to ensure curriculum, assessments, intervention, and instructional programming align with the school's mission, vision, academic model, and expectations.
- b. Current curriculum planning includes core and supplemental resources across Literacy, Math, Science, Social Studies, Intervention, and Character Development.
- c. Simply put: Before opening, we are making sure teachers have the right materials, assessments, and instructional systems needed to help scholars meet our academic goals.

3. Tennessee Department of Education Engagement

- a. School leadership continues to participate in relevant Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) meetings, trainings, and events to remain informed about state academic requirements, accountability expectations, instructional guidance, and available resources.
- b. Simply put: We are staying closely connected to the state so that Novus is prepared to meet Tennessee's academic and compliance expectations from Day 1.

4. BES Follow-on Support & Academic Readiness

- a. Leadership continues to participate in BES school launch training and support to strengthen academic, operational, and organizational readiness ahead of the August 2027 opening.
- b. Simply put: The founding team is receiving ongoing training and support before the school opens, rather than waiting until students arrive to build critical systems.

Facilities & Finance Updates

1. CSGF Seed Goals

- a. Secure an affordable facility and sign a lease by March 1, 2027.
- b. 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](#)

Grants Updates

1. Securing Grants Updates: [Click Here](#)
2. Appropriations Committee in Congress in Tennessee that Supports Charter Schools: [Click Here](#)



Required Board Trainings

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:**
 - a. **Returning Board Members:** Please register and complete the available training modules.

School/CMO Name*

Novus SMART Academy (K-8)

- b. **New Board Members:** Please also register under “**Returning Members**” for now and complete the modules currently available. **There are currently 4 modules to complete.**
- c. 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.
- d. 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.

Academic Excellence Committee Report by Committee Chair Dr. Dexter Peterson (15 minutes)

Date: September 19, 2026

Time: 5:00-6:30 PM CT (Called to order at 5:12 PM)

Committee Meeting Objective

The Academic Excellence Committee met to continue ensuring that Novus SMART Academy’s academic model, leadership structure, and staffing approach are fully defined, measurable, financially sustainable, and executable in preparation for the school’s August 2027 opening. The Committee’s work also supports the Board’s readiness to provide effective academic oversight.

School Leadership Review

- The Committee reviewed progress related to the recruitment of the Founding Dean of Academics & Scholar Access and Founding Dean of School Culture & Community Partnerships, two critical leadership positions scheduled to join the organization in advance of the 2027–2028 school year.
- The Committee discussed the importance of clearly defining the characteristics, competencies, and experiences required for each founding leadership role. Particular attention was given to ensuring that candidates demonstrate strong alignment with Novus SMART Academy’s mission, academic model, culture, expectations for scholars, and commitment to serving the La Vergne and Smyrna communities.
- The administration reported that Dominique Tross, Founding Director of Operations & Finance, has conducted outreach to several local colleges and universities and shared the two founding dean opportunities with their education departments to broaden the candidate pipeline.
- The Committee also discussed current candidate profiles and the need to revisit the personnel budget to ensure that compensation is appropriately aligned with the caliber and experience of candidates being pursued. The administration will continue evaluating the compensation structure while maintaining overall budget sustainability.
- Additionally, the Committee discussed continued recruitment of a Founding Parent representative for the Board of Directors as the school strengthens family voice within its governance structure.
- Current employment opportunities and application information are available through the Novus SMART Academy website.

TeachStart Staffing Model Review

- The Committee reviewed the TeachStart proposal as a potential strategy for supporting Novus SMART Academy’s two-educator classroom model.



- A central question was whether Novus would achieve greater long-term financial and operational value by directly employing its additional classroom personnel and separately securing substitute coverage as needed, rather than contracting with TeachStart for the full staffing model.
- The Committee discussed the importance of balancing cost savings with staffing reliability, candidate quality, employee development, retention, and the school's ability to consistently execute its instructional model.
- Based on the discussion, the Committee's current direction is to prioritize building Novus SMART Academy's own candidate pipeline and directly hiring qualified employees where feasible. TeachStart may remain a valuable staffing resource if the school experiences difficulty filling positions or requires additional staffing support.
- This approach allows Novus to continue developing its own talent pipeline while preserving TeachStart as a potential strategic staffing partner rather than committing prematurely to the full proposed model.

Key Takeaways and Next Steps

1. **Leadership Recruitment:** Continue recruitment for both founding dean positions and refine the leadership characteristics and competencies that will guide candidate selection.
2. **Compensation Review:** Revisit the personnel budget and compensation ranges to ensure Novus can competitively recruit high-quality founding leaders while maintaining financial sustainability.
3. **Higher Education Outreach:** Continue expanding relationships with local colleges and universities to strengthen the candidate pipeline for leadership and school-based positions.
4. **Founding Parent Representation:** Continue identifying and cultivating prospective founding parents who could provide meaningful family representation on the Board.
5. **TeachStart Analysis:** Continue evaluating the financial and operational implications of TeachStart compared with directly employing Novus staff.
6. **Staffing Strategy:** Prioritize direct recruitment and hiring while considering TeachStart as a supplemental option if Novus encounters staffing shortages or pipeline challenges.

Items for Board Awareness

- At this time, the Committee is not presenting a formal recommendation for Board action regarding TeachStart. Administration will continue evaluating the proposal alongside the direct-hire staffing model and budget before any contractual commitment is brought forward.
- The Board should also be aware that recruitment of the two founding deans remains an important pre-opening priority, with continued attention being given to candidate quality, role alignment, and competitive compensation.

Committee Focus Moving Forward

As Novus SMART Academy advances toward its August 2027 opening, the Academic Excellence Committee will continue monitoring the readiness of the academic program, leadership pipeline, instructional staffing model, and systems necessary for successful implementation and effective Board oversight.

Finance & Development Committee Report by Board Treasurer & Committee Chair Daniel Kadeba (15 minutes)

Date: September 2, 2026

Time: 6:30-8:00 PM CT

Called to Order: 6:42 PM

Committee Meeting Objective

The Finance & Development Committee continues to focus on strengthening Novus SMART Academy's financial infrastructure, maintaining responsible fiscal oversight during the pre-opening period, preparing for significant startup and facility expenditures, and developing a sustainable fundraising strategy as the school prepares to open in August 2027.

I. Financial Management & Organizational Infrastructure

A. BES School Launch Support Scholarship & Startup Grant Update

1. The Committee received an update regarding the funding and support opportunities associated with the Andrew Carnegie Foundation and BES School Launch Support.



- a) Startup Grant: Not Awarded. Novus SMART Academy did not receive the \$50,000 startup grant. Accordingly, the \$50,000 should not be included as anticipated or awarded revenue in the school's financial projections. The leadership team and Vertex Education will ensure that the budget reflects this update as part of the ongoing budget true-up process.
 - b) School Launch Support: Full Scholarship Awarded. While Novus did not receive the startup grant, the school was selected to receive a full scholarship covering the full cost of BES School Launch Support for the 2026-27 school year. The scholarship was made possible through the support of the Andrew Carnegie Foundation.
2. The scholarship allows Novus to participate fully in BES School Launch Support during its critical pre-opening year without bearing the program's full cost. This represents a significant programmatic investment in Novus but does not represent \$50,000 in cash funding received by the school.
3. For Board and financial reporting purposes, these should therefore be treated as two distinct outcomes:
 - a) \$50,000 Startup Grant: Not awarded; no grant revenue received.
 - b) BES School Launch Support Scholarship: Awarded; full cost of the 2026-27 program covered through the Andrew Carnegie Foundation-supported scholarship.

B. Banking Access & Internal Controls

1. The Committee reviewed the status of Founding Director of Operations & Finance Dominique Tross's access to the school's Pinnacle banking account.
2. Establishing appropriate access is an important part of transitioning routine financial responsibilities to the school-based finance and operations function while maintaining appropriate segregation of duties, authorization levels, documentation, and Board oversight.
3. As Novus adds employees and increases purchasing activity, the school will continue strengthening its financial controls and ensuring that appropriate systems are in place before opening.

C. Vertex Education Partnership & Financial Management Cadence

1. 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.
2. These meetings provide dedicated time for the school leadership team and Vertex to review:
 - a) Budget assumptions and projections;
 - b) Cash flow and account balances;
 - c) Personnel and benefits costs;
 - d) Vendor and contractual expenses;
 - e) Outstanding and anticipated payments;
 - f) Facility-related expenditures; and
 - g) Other financial considerations associated with the pre-opening year.
3. The Executive Director has also requested that Vertex participate in appropriate monthly Board work sessions. This will provide Board members with regular opportunities to engage directly with the school's financial reporting, budget projections, and fiscal planning.
4. **Budget True-Up**
 - a) 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.
 - b) This process is intended to ensure that the budget increasingly reflects known and anticipated costs as Novus progresses through its pre-opening year.
 - c) The review includes current assumptions related to:
 - (1) Personnel and benefits;
 - (2) Vendors and professional services;
 - (3) Curriculum and instructional investments;
 - (4) Technology;
 - (5) Enrollment and recruitment;
 - (6) Facilities;
 - (7) Insurance; and
 - (8) Other startup obligations.



- d) The budget will continue to function as a working financial plan and will be refined as major assumptions- particularly those related to facilities, staffing, and enrollment- become more certain.

D. Overall Financial Position

1. The Committee continues to monitor the organization's overall financial position, including:
 - a) Current account balances;
 - b) Outstanding payments and obligations;
 - c) Anticipated expenditures;
 - d) Cash flow;
 - e) Grant and startup funding; and
 - f) Budget-to-actual performance.
2. This monitoring will become increasingly important as Novus enters a period of increased expenditures related to staffing, enrollment, facilities, curriculum, technology, insurance, professional services, and other school startup activities.
3. Updated financial information will continue to be presented through the Finance & Development Committee and the Board's regular financial reporting structure.

II. Facilities & Budget Planning

- A. Facilities remain one of Novus SMART Academy's most significant financial priorities and areas of potential budget variability.
- B. The Committee discussed the need to continuously incorporate updated facility information into the school's financial model, including:
 1. Lease costs and the final cost per square foot;
 2. Required facility and life-safety improvements;
 3. Traffic and feasibility-related expenses;
 4. Professional and consulting costs; and
 5. Other expenditures necessary to prepare the facility for school occupancy.
- C. As additional information becomes available, the school-based leadership team and Vertex will determine whether budget revisions are necessary based on updated facility assumptions.
- D. Maintaining sufficient flexibility within the pre-opening and Year 1 budgets remains important until lease terms and the full scope of required facility expenditures are finalized.

III. Financial Policies, Procedures & Controls

- A. The Committee continues its review of Novus SMART Academy's Financial Policies & Procedures Manual.
- B. As the organization grows, the Committee is focused on ensuring that Novus has clearly documented and consistently implemented systems governing financial activity.
- C. Areas of continued attention include:
 1. Purchasing and procurement;
 2. Banking controls;
 3. Segregation of duties;
 4. Approval thresholds;
 5. Financial documentation;
 6. Credit and purchasing-card usage;
 7. Authorization requirements;
 8. Financial reporting; and
 9. Board oversight.
- D. This work is particularly important as Novus transitions from a smaller startup organization into an operating public charter school with substantially greater staffing, purchasing, and financial activity.

IV. Development, Fundraising & Board Engagement

A. Development Strategy

1. The Committee continues to advance Novus SMART Academy's development strategy through fundraising, prospective partnerships, sponsorship opportunities, philanthropic relationships, and community engagement.



2. The next phase of this work will focus on building a development strategy that extends beyond individual Board giving and intentionally leverages the collective relationships and networks of the Board of Directors.

B. Board Giving & Fundraising Expectations

1. The Board has established the following annual fundraising expectations:
 - a) Board Baseline Fundraising Goal: \$50,000
 - b) Individual Board Member Give/Get Commitment: \$4,000
2. The Committee is working to ensure that the \$4,000 give/get expectation is clearly defined and consistently understood.
3. Board members may work toward their individual commitment through:
 - a) Personal financial contributions;
 - b) Securing individual donations;
 - c) Obtaining corporate or community sponsorships;
 - d) Leveraging professional and personal networks for financial support; or
 - e) An appropriate combination of these approaches.
4. The Committee will continue developing systems for tracking individual commitments and progress, establishing appropriate deadlines and accountability, and providing Board members with resources to support their fundraising efforts.

C. Board Cultivation Strategy

1. The Committee discussed moving beyond transactional fundraising and intentionally developing a Board-driven cultivation pipeline of potential supporters.
2. As an initial exercise, each Board member will be encouraged to identify approximately 10 potential funders, donors, corporate partners, philanthropic contacts, or other strategic relationships within their existing networks.
3. These names will help Novus develop a broader prospect pipeline that can be strategically prioritized for:
 - a) Warm introductions;
 - b) Relationship-building;
 - c) School awareness and engagement;
 - d) Philanthropic conversations;
 - e) Corporate sponsorships;
 - f) Strategic partnerships; and
 - g) Future funding requests.
4. The objective is cultivation before solicitation. Identification of a contact does not mean that the individual or organization will immediately receive a funding request. Instead, the exercise will help Novus better understand the collective reach of the Board and intentionally develop relationships over time.
5. With each Board member identifying approximately 10 contacts, the school can begin developing a meaningful prospect pipeline while also giving Board members a concrete and accessible way to participate in the school's development strategy.

V. Board & Committee Leadership Transition

- A. Chris Hill formally announced his resignation from the Novus SMART Academy Board of Directors, effective Friday, October 1, 2026.
 1. The Committee recognizes Chris for his service and contributions to Novus SMART Academy, particularly his work supporting the organization's development and fundraising efforts.
 2. His departure also provides an opportunity to thoughtfully consider the future membership and leadership structure of the Finance & Development Committee as the Board continues to grow.
- B. **Proposed Appointment of Daniel Kadeba as Committee Chair**
 1. 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.
 - a) Daniel would serve as Chair while the Board continues building sufficient membership and leadership capacity within both the Finance and Development functions.
 - b) This interim structure will allow the Board to intentionally recruit and place members with complementary expertise in:
 - (1) Finance and accounting;



- (2) Audit and internal controls;
 - (3) Fundraising and philanthropy;
 - (4) Business development;
 - (5) Corporate partnerships; and
 - (6) Community engagement.
- c) Once both functions are sufficiently built out, the Board can determine the appropriate long-term committee structure and leadership, including whether Finance and Development should remain combined or operate as separate committees.
2. **Proposed Motion #1: Finance & Development Committee Chair:** I move that the Board of Directors appoint Daniel Kadeba as Chair of the Finance & Development Committee, effective October 10, 2026, to serve until the Finance and Development functions are fully built out and the Board determines the appropriate long-term committee leadership structure.
3. **Board Action:** Approve the proposal to appoint Daniel Kadeba as Chair of the Finance & Development Committee, effective October 10, 2026.
- Vote:** ☐ Approve
☐ Oppose
☐ Abstain

VI. Board Candidate Recommendation: Tachi Lynch

- A. The Finance & Development Committee recommends Tachi Lynch for appointment to the Novus SMART Academy Board of Directors.
- B. Tachi completed her Final Capacity Interview on Saturday, August 22, 2026, immediately following the August Board meeting. The interview examined her alignment with Novus's mission and vision, professional expertise, approach to governance and community engagement, fundraising capacity, and ability to fulfill the responsibilities of Board service.
1. **Finance, Audit & Risk-Management Experience**
- a) Tachi identified a professional background that could strengthen the Board's financial oversight capacity. Her responses identified CPA eligibility, an audit and information-systems background, risk mitigation and organizational assessment experience, and experience implementing accounting software.
 - b) During the discussion regarding Novus's financial systems and Vertex Education, she identified several areas warranting strong financial controls, including purchase orders, card usage, signature requirements, appropriate thresholds, and due diligence.
 - c) These areas of experience align with the Board's increasing need for finance, audit, compliance, and internal-controls expertise as Novus approaches opening.
2. **Mission, Family & Community Alignment**
- a) Tachi described education as instrumental to her own success and discussed the importance of having a strong educational foundation.
 - b) When discussing family and community partnerships, she described partnership as a journey with families that requires collaboration, meeting students where they are, providing families with resources and solutions, and maintaining strong communication to build trust.
 - c) She also shared a personal connection to the community through her sister and discussed both the area's growth and the importance of expanding opportunities and support for children and families.
3. **Governance & Accountability**
- a) Tachi demonstrated an understanding of the distinction between governance and management, describing management as focused on day-to-day responsibilities while governance establishes the structure and regulatory framework surrounding management.
 - b) She emphasized regulatory compliance, accountability, presenting solutions, and supporting collective Board decisions even when she may not personally favor the decision.
 - c) She also described herself as willing to serve as a counterpart to the Executive Director's vision while being vocal when she believes something is not functioning appropriately.



4. Development & Board Engagement

- a) Tachi identified creative opportunities for supporting fundraising, including leveraging marketing expertise, virtual fundraising activities, and social media campaigns.
 - b) She also affirmed her ability to meet the anticipated Board time commitment and monthly meeting expectations, identifying time management as one of her strengths.
 - c) The interview debrief identified her finance skill set, potential fit with the team culture, and thoughtfulness regarding community engagement as notable observations from the process.
- C. Given the Board's current needs, Tachi's professional experience would add capacity in finance, audit, risk management, internal controls, technology, and development. Her background also makes the Finance & Development Committee a natural initial committee placement for Board consideration.
- D. **Proposed Motion #2: Appointment of Tachi Lynch**
- 1. I move that the Board of Directors approve the appointment of Tachi Lynch to the Novus SMART Academy Board of Directors, effective upon Board approval, subject to completion of all required onboarding, conflict-of-interest disclosures, and Board member requirements.
 - 2. Upon appointment, Tachi would complete Novus SMART Academy's established Board onboarding and governance-training process.
 - 3. **Board Action:** Approve the proposal to appoint Daniel Kadeba as Chair of the Finance & Development Committee, effective October 10, 2026.
- Vote:** ☐ Approve
☐ Oppose
☐ Abstain

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

- A. Complete the budget true-up with Vertex Education and incorporate the most accurate personnel, benefits, vendor, programmatic, and facilities assumptions.
- B. Continue strengthening financial systems and internal controls, including banking access, purchasing processes, approval structures, and financial reporting.
- C. Refine facility-related budget projections as lease terms, required improvements, and other occupancy costs become clearer.
- D. Monitor Novus's overall financial position, including cash, outstanding obligations, projected expenditures, grant funding, and budget-to-actual performance.
- E. Advance the \$50,000 annual Board fundraising goal and establish clear tracking and accountability for individual \$4,000 give/get commitments.
- F. 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.
- G. 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.
- H. Determine next steps regarding Dun & Bradstreet based on organizational need, anticipated value, and cost.
- I. Transition Finance & Development Committee leadership following Chris Hill's October 1st departure and, subject to Board approval, establish Daniel Kadeba as Committee Chair.
- J. Continue building Finance and Development capacity through Board recruitment, onboarding, committee assignments, and clarification of the long-term committee structure.



Governance Committee Report by Board Chair & Governance Committee Chair Charles Frazier (10 minutes)

Date: September 15, 2026

Time: 6:00-8:00 PM CT

Called to Order: 6:05 PM

Committee Meeting Objective

The Governance Committee convened 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.

Board Member Recruitment and Selection

- The Committee reviewed the current pipeline of prospective Board members and discussed next steps in the recruitment and selection process.
- Five prospective candidates have completed initial prescreening and are ready to advance in the selection process. The Committee discussed conducting candidate interviews following the September Board meeting, based on candidate and Committee availability.
- 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.
- The Committee will continue using the established candidate pipeline, prescreening, interview, recommendation, and onboarding process to support thoughtful Board growth.

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.
- The Governance Committee reviewed the disclosure alongside Novus SMART Academy's existing Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Based on the information presented and its review of the policy, the Governance Committee determined that the circumstances described in the disclosure did not constitute a conflict of interest under the school's current policy.
- The Committee documented its review as part of its responsibility to maintain appropriate governance oversight and organizational transparency.

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: [Click Here](#)
- The Committee supports establishing a consistent onboarding process that ensures new members understand:
 - Novus SMART Academy's mission, vision, and strategic priorities;
 - Board roles, responsibilities, and expectations;
 - Committee responsibilities;
 - Governing policies and bylaws;
 - Tennessee Open Meetings requirements;
 - Conflict-of-interest expectations;
 - Financial and academic oversight responsibilities; and
 - Expectations associated with preparing for the school's August 2027 opening.

Recommendation to the Board



- Proposed Motion #3: Adoption of the revised Board of Directors Orientation Checklist: I move that the Board of Directors adopt the revised Board of Directors Orientation Checklist as the standard framework for onboarding future Board members.
- Board Action: Adopt the revised Board of Directors Orientation Checklist as the standard framework for onboarding future Board members.
 - Vote: ☐ Approve
☐ Oppose
☐ Abstain

Employee Handbook Review

- The Committee continued its review of the Novus SMART Academy Employee Handbook.
- Board Chair Charles Frazier provided substantive recommendations and suggested revisions to strengthen the document. Dr. Sager will incorporate the Committee's feedback and return the revised Employee Handbook to the Governance Committee for final review before it advances for Board consideration.
- Status: Revision in progress; no final Board action requested at this time.

Governance Policies and Compliance

- The Committee reaffirmed its responsibility for ensuring that Novus maintains the governance infrastructure necessary for effective oversight and organizational compliance.
- Priority governance documents include the:
 - Bylaws;
 - Conflict of Interest Policy;
 - Code of Conduct;
 - Open Meetings requirements;
 - Public Comment Policy;
 - Board Norms;
 - Board Commitment, Norms, and Governance Framework; and
 - Employee Handbook and personnel policies.
- The Committee will continue reviewing these documents throughout the planning year to ensure they remain aligned with the organization's needs, charter obligations, applicable requirements, and preparation for school opening.

Governance Priorities for the Planning Year

- The Committee reaffirmed several governance priorities for the 2026-2027 planning year.
- A central priority is maintaining a clear distinction between **Board governance and school operations**. The Board is responsible for oversight, policy, financial stewardship, accountability, strategic direction, and evaluation of the Executive Director, while the Executive Director remains responsible for the day-to-day management and implementation of the school's work.
- Additional priorities include strengthening committee effectiveness, maintaining consistent Board meeting practices, recruiting members strategically, providing ongoing Board development and training, conducting Board self-assessment, and establishing appropriate leadership succession practices.
- The Committee also reaffirmed the importance of maintaining Board meetings at accessible locations within Rutherford County.

Required Board Trainings

- 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.
- 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>
- **Important Notes:**
 - **Returning Board Members:** Please register and complete the available training modules.

School/CMO Name*

Novus SMART Academy (K-8)



- **New Board Members:** Please also register under “**Returning Members**” for now and complete the modules currently available. **There are currently 4 modules to complete.**
- 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.
- 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.