Novus SMART Academy (K-8)
New Board Members Orientation Checklist

Welcome to the Board of Directors of Novus SMART Academy! We are excited to have you join us as we work toward our August 2027 school opening.

This onboarding process is designed to familiarize you with our mission, vision, values, governance structure, policies, strategic priorities, and expectations for Board service. Completing these steps will help ensure that every Board member is informed, prepared, and equipped to contribute meaningfully to the success of Novus SMART Academy.

Please click the hyperlinks throughout this checklist to review the associated documents and resources. Complete each item and reach out to the Board Chair, your Committee Chair, the Executive Director, or the Board Secretary if you need assistance.

Actions Required

Step 1: Participate in Board Member Orientation

- ☐ Complete an introductory meeting with the Board Chair, your designated Committee Chair, and the Executive Director to discuss the organization's mission, vision, values, strategic priorities, and current organizational needs.
- ☐ Participate in a collaborative orientation meeting with the Board Chair, Committee Chair, and Executive Director.
- ☐ Review the mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities of Novus SMART Academy.
- ☐ Discuss the organization's current priorities, key milestones, and progress toward the anticipated August 2027 opening.
- ☐ Complete the Board of Directors' All About Me Survey.
- ☐ Discuss your skills, experience, interests, and potential contributions to the Board and its committees.

Step 2: Understand Board Governance and Responsibilities: Review the governing documents and resources that establish the Board's authority, responsibilities, and expectations for effective governance.

- ☐ Review the Board Roles & Responsibilities: Click Here
- ☐ Review the Board of Directors Commitment to the Governance Framework Draft: Click Here
- ☐ Review the Board Policies Draft: Click Here
- ☐ Review the Board By-laws Draft: Click Here
- ☐ Review the Conflict of Interest Policy Draft: Click Here
    - ☐ Notify the Board of Directors if any potential conflict of interest arises.
- ☐ Review the Policies and Procedures Drafts: Click Here
- ☐ Review the Open Meetings Law: Click Here
- ☐ Review the What Every Board Member Should Know-TN Guide for Nonprofits: Click Here

As part of this review, ensure you understand:

- [ ] Your fiduciary duties of care, loyalty, and obedience, as applicable.
- [ ] The distinction between the Board's governance responsibilities and the Executive Director's operational responsibilities.
- [ ] Board authority, voting procedures, in-person quorum requirements, and meeting expectations.
- [ ] Confidentiality requirements and appropriate handling of sensitive organizational information.
- [ ] The importance of complying with applicable laws, governing documents, and Board policies.

Step 3: Complete Required Disclosures and Compliance Documentation: Complete the required documentation to support transparency, accountability, and responsible Board service.

- [ ] Complete and submit the required conflict-of-interest disclosure (Click Here).
- [ ] Review and acknowledge applicable confidentiality requirements.
- [ ] Complete any required Board member agreements, acknowledgments, and compliance documentation.
- [ ] Notify the Board of Directors promptly if an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest arises during your service.
- [ ] Follow applicable procedures for disclosing conflicts and recusing yourself from discussions or votes when required.

Important: Conflict-of-interest disclosures should be updated as circumstances change and in accordance with the organization's policies.

Step 4: Confirm Committee Assignment and Participation Expectations
Every Board member is expected to contribute actively to the work of at least one committee.

- [ ] Commit to serving on at least one Board committee.
- [ ] Confirm your committee assignment with the Board Chair and appropriate Committee Chair.
- [ ] Review the committee's purpose, responsibilities, and priorities.
    - [ ] Roles & Responsibilities: Click Here
- [ ] Discuss expectations for committee meeting attendance, preparation, participation, and follow-through.
- [ ] Understand how committee recommendations are communicated to and considered by the full Board.

Step 5: Review the Board Calendar, Meetings, and Communication Protocols: Become familiar with the Board's schedule, meeting procedures, and communication expectations.

- [ ] Review the Annual Board Calendar: Click Here
- [ ] Review past Board meetings, agendas, committee work sessions, and retreats (Click Here).
- [ ] Review Board meeting procedures, including agenda preparation, meeting participation, voting, and documentation.
- [ ] Understand attendance expectations for Board meetings, committee meetings, work sessions, and retreats.
- [ ] Review established communication protocols, including how to access Board communications, share information, and raise questions or concerns.
- [ ] Confirm how meeting materials, agendas, minutes, and action items are distributed and maintained.

Step 6: Access Board Platforms, Folders, and Documents: Ensure you can access the tools and resources necessary to participate effectively in Board activities.

- ☐ Log in to your BoardOnTrack account.
- ☐ Access the designated Novus SMART Academy Google Folder (Click Here).
- ☐ Confirm that you can locate Board materials, policies, meeting agendas, minutes, committee documents, and other relevant resources.
- ☐ Notify the appropriate Board representative if you experience access issues or need assistance.

Step 7: Review Organizational Priorities and Strategic Initiatives: Familiarize yourself with the broader educational, regulatory, and strategic context in which Novus SMART Academy operates.

- ☐ Review the Tennessee Charter School Center Priorities: Click Here
- ☐ Review the 2026 Public Chapters (pay close attention to Chapter 0852): Click Here
- ☐ Review the Launch27: Built to Last Campaign: Click Here
- ☐ Review relevant organizational plans, policies, and procedures associated with the school's development and anticipated opening.
- ☐ Review available organizational financial information, including the approved budget, financial reports, financial oversight procedures, and reporting expectations, as applicable.
- ☐ Discuss current organizational milestones, risks, resource needs, and strategic priorities with the appropriate Board representatives.

Step 8: Complete Required Board Training

- 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.
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  - **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.

Step 9: Complete Onboarding and Confirm Readiness for Board Service: Before participating in Board meetings and work sessions as an official Board member, ensure all applicable onboarding requirements have been completed and your access and responsibilities are confirmed.

- ☐ Confirm completion of the onboarding checklist with the Board Secretary or designated Board officer.
- ☐ Confirm your committee assignment and understand your participation expectations.
- ☐ Confirm access to BoardOnTrack, the Google Folder, and all required organizational resources.
- ☐ Complete required training, disclosures, acknowledgments, and other applicable documentation.
- ☐ Confirm that you understand Board meeting procedures, attendance expectations, and communication protocols.
- ☐ Identify any outstanding questions, training needs, or resource requests.
- ☐ Participate in any additional orientation or check-in meeting requested by the Board Chair, Committee Chair, or Executive Director.

Ongoing Expectations for Board Members: Board onboarding is the beginning of an ongoing commitment to responsible governance and active participation. Throughout your service, please:

- Attend and actively participate in Board and committee meetings.
- Review meeting materials in advance and follow through on assigned responsibilities.
- Maintain confidentiality and disclose potential conflicts of interest promptly.
- Stay informed about organizational priorities, financial oversight, applicable laws, and governance requirements.
- Communicate respectfully and professionally with fellow Board members and organizational leadership.
- Seek clarification or assistance whenever questions arise.
- Complete ongoing training and any required updates to disclosures or compliance documentation.

Final Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have reviewed the applicable onboarding materials, understand the expectations of Board service, and will complete all required documentation and training. I understand that I am responsible for asking questions when clarification is needed and for notifying the appropriate Board representative of any outstanding onboarding requirements.

Board Member Name: _____

Board Member Signature: _____

Date: _____

Board Secretary or Designee: _____

Date Checklist Completed: _____

Need help? Please reach out to the Board Chair, your Committee Chair, the Executive Director, or the Board Secretary. We want to ensure you have the information, access, and support needed to serve effectively.

Thank you for your commitment to Novus SMART Academy and the students, families, and community we serve.