

107 **INNOVATION ACADEMY BOARD ELECTION PROCESS**

I. **PURPOSE**

The Board shall appoint a Board Development Committee that will follow the election procedures described below for the Innovation Academy Board of Directors.

II. **POLICY STATEMENT**

In accordance with the Innovation Academy Bylaws and Minnesota law, elections for the Board of Directors will be held in May of every year unless called for by the board.

III. **SELECTING POSSIBLE BOARD CANDIDATES**

- A. The Board Development Committee should gather enough candidates, to fill vacant seats, to present to the Board.
- B. The Board of Directors Nomination Form (*see* Attachment A) should be completed for each candidate.
- C. The Board Development Committee shall present the list of prospective candidates to the Board of Directors.
- D. The Board of Directors must be composed of at least five members who are not related or affiliated with one another, with at least one of each of the following: 1) licensed teachers teaching in the classroom; 2) a parent or legal guardian who is not an employee of Innovation Academy; and 3) a community member who is not an employee or parent of Innovation Academy.
- E. Immediate family members of school employees are not eligible to serve on the Board.

IV. **CONTACTING POSSIBLE BOARD CANDIDATES**

- A. Once there are prospective board candidates, the Board Development Committee members will then contact the prospects. The Board Development Committee will use the following materials:
 - 1. A personalized cover letter that informs the prospect of the Board's interest in him/her, a brief description of the recruitment and nominations process, and an invitation to be considered for the Innovation Academy Board of Directors (*see* Attachment B).
 - 2. A copy of the position description that details the roles and responsibilities of a Board Director (*see* Attachment C).
 - 3. Additional material about the Innovation Academy Board and its responsibilities.

4. A response form that the prospect can return indicating he/she would like more information and/or they want to be considered for the Board of Directors (*see* Attachment D).
 5. A completed background check.
- B. This mailing will be followed by a personal phone call from designated members of the Board Development Committee. This will give Board Development Committee members a chance to respond to any questions that the prospect might have, invite them to a school function if they are unfamiliar with Innovation Academy, and to invite them to talk with administration and other staff.

V. ORIENTATION

- A. The Board Development Committee will then schedule an orientation with all prospective board candidates who responded to the mailing and phone calls.

In this orientation, the agenda will consist of:

1. Welcome and introductions;
 2. Overview of the mission, vision and educational goals of the school;
 3. Overview of the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors;
 4. Review of the individual job description detailing specific expectations (for example, committee work, meeting attendance, involvement in community outreach, etc.).
 5. Opportunity for Board candidates to ask questions; and
 6. Declarations of willingness to serve by the Board candidates.
- B. After the orientation session is completed, individuals who wish to continue in the process, will be asked to fill out the questionnaire that provides some background information (*see* Attachment E). Some of this information can be included in their profiles that will be distributed to all individuals who are eligible to vote (*see* Attachment F). A deadline date to return the questionnaire will be given or it will be sent to them prior to the orientation.
- C. After the orientation is completed, the Board Development Committee will meet to review all of the individuals who participated.

When reviewing the prospective Board Directors, the Board Development Committee should ask the following questions:

1. Does the candidate appear to be committed to the mission and educational philosophy of Innovation Academy?

2. Can the candidate contribute the time necessary to be an effective Board Member?
3. Does the candidate possess some of the key skills, knowledge and other assets that match the Board to recruiting priorities?
4. Does it appear that the candidate can place Innovation Academy purposes and interest above their own professional and personal interest when making decisions as a Board Member?

VI. ELECTION

- A. After the Board Development Committee has finished the nomination process, it then will create ballots and other election materials. An outside, independent organization will facilitate the distribution and tabulation of ballots to all eligible voters. Each student's mother and father or legal guardians have one vote, with a maximum of two voters per family; each school employee has one vote.
- B. Innovation Academy must notify eligible voters of the Board of Directors' election at least 30 days before the election. No elections will be held during holidays or school breaks. Elections must be held during the school year.
- C. Absentee voting will be allowable for those who make a formal request via email to oolatoye@innovationsta.org or written letter addressed to the Board Development Committee. Requests need to be made at least 7 days prior to the election. Ballots must be completed in person at least 1 day prior to the election. Requests and votes that do not meet this criteria will not be counted.
- D. Once all votes are in and tabulated, the new appointed Board of Directors will be
 - (1) Notified officially at the next month's meeting following the election (May).
 - (2) Sign the Board Member Profile Agreement (see Attachment G), Attend a Board meeting, attend a committee meeting, register for Board Training, and review Board bylaws & Policy Handbook (June).
 - (3) Take their place on the Board of Directors (July).

Legal Reference: Minn. Stat. §124E.10 (Charter School Law)

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Why are you recommending this person? _____

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INVITATION LETTER

(Attachment B)

You have been recommended to our Board Development Committee as a possible candidate for Board service. We are requesting that you give serious consideration to this nomination for a Board position.

The next several years promise to be exciting ones for Innovation Academy. Innovation Academy will continue to have a positive impact on the children and families we serve. The Board of Directors will play a central role in this important work.

Because of your experience and involvement in Innovation Academy and/or the community, we feel you are well qualified to be nominated for a Board position. As you consider this opportunity, we ask you to review the Board Director Position Description included in this mailing. As you will see, we are expecting the Board to be an active one.

A primary responsibility of Board Directors is to participate in the development of policy and major decision-making at Board meetings held at least 6 times a year. *Another key responsibility is to be active on an ongoing basis in a committee of the Board. Board nominees will be asked to make that commitment before they are voted onto the Board.*

Since its opening, Innovation Academy has become recognized as an effective educational leader having real impact within the community. We invite you to become a part of this growing tradition.

A member of our Board Development Committee has been asked to contact you by phone to discuss this invitation with you. You may have already received this call. In the meantime, if you wish to be considered as a candidate for the Board of Directors, please send in the enclosed response form. If your answer is "yes," you will be asked to attend a short orientation meeting to review Board responsibilities in more detail and you will receive additional information about Innovation Academy.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Omotoke Olatoye, Executive Director.

Sincerely,

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BOARD DIRECTOR POSITION DESCRIPTION
(Attachment C)

1. Attend regular meetings of the Innovation Academy Board, which are each approximately 1.5 hours in duration. The Board meets monthly. Be accessible for personal contact in-between Board meetings.
2. Provide leadership to Board committees. Each Board Director is expected to serve as an active, ongoing member of at least one committee. This requires a number of meetings per year plus individual committee task completions.
3. Commit time to attend important school related functions, such as staff meetings, staff workshops, open houses, and parent-teacher conference.
4. Responsibly review and act upon committee recommendations brought to the Board for action.
5. Prepare in advance for decision-making and policy formation at Board meetings; take responsibility for self-education on the major issues before the Board.
6. Participate in the annual Board Director self-review process.
7. Participate in the annual Board development and planning conference.
8. In general, utilize personal and professional skills, relationships, and knowledge for the advancement Innovation Academy.
9. Be familiar with and act in accord with Innovation Academy's Board of Directors' Policy Manual.
10. Meet the duty of care, obedience and loyalty as defined in Minnesota Statutes §317A.
11. Participate in the Board training required under Minnesota Statutes §124E.10.

I am aware that this Board Director Position Description is an expression of good faith and provides a common ground from which Board Directors can operate. Additional information on the mission of Innovation Academy, educational program and Board responsibilities is contained in the Board orientation materials and bylaws which I have read.

Board Director's Signature

Date

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BOARD NOMINATIONS RESPONSE FORM (Attachment D)

Please Check One:

- I am interested in being considered for an Innovation Academy Board position. Contact me with information about the upcoming orientation session.
- Contact me. I need more information before I can decide if I want to be considered for a Board position.
- No thank you. Not at this time.

Name _____

Day Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

Return by Email at: oolatoye@innovationsta.org

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**BOARD APPLICATION FORM
(Attachment E)**

Complete this form and return to Innovation Academy Board Development Committee.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Relevant Community Experience and/or Employment (attach a resume if relevant): _____

Why are you interested in serving as a Board Director? _____

Area(s) of expertise/contributions you feel you can make to our school as a Board Director: _____

Other volunteer commitments: _____

Nominee: _____ Date: _____

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For Board Committee Use

____ Nominee has had a personal meeting with the Board Development Committee Chair, Board Chair, Charter School Administrator, or other Board Director. Date: _____

____ Nominee reviewed by the Board Development Committee. Date _____

____ Nominee attended a Board meeting. Date _____

____ Nominee interviewed by the Board. Date _____

Action taken by the Board: _____

BOARD MEMBER PROFILE AGREEMENT

(Attachment G)

Innovation Academy Board of Directors shall have a firm knowledge of creating an effective charter school governing Board. Directors shall be fully committed to the charter school concept. The purpose of the Board of Directors is to direct, not manage, the school. Board members should be able carry out the Innovation Academy's vision, foster relationships with staff and the school community, and oversee the budget.

All Board members should attend at least two school related functions, such as staff meetings, staff workshops, open houses, and parent-teacher conferences per year to show support and encouragement for that vital aspect of our school. Board members may chair and serve on committees.

Prior Board experience is helpful. A high value for professionalism and the success of the school is mandatory. Motivation for serving on the Board shall be to help guarantee the educational success of students.

All Board members are expected to attend a yearly Board conference where the goals of the Board are defined, a Board self-evaluation critique is conducted, outside speakers present information on effective Board leadership, and other pertinent topics are discussed. The Board will annually attend a Board Visit Day. During this time, Directors will visit with the staff and become familiar with current school concerns. The Board will annually conduct a selfevaluation. Goals for the next year will also be determined at that time. Directors shall fulfill their responsibilities on the Board, Board committees or subcommittees to their fullest capability. All Board members should be the best public relations representatives the school has.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

Expectations include a professional demeanor at all Board meetings. Issues being discussed shall not be personalized and directed toward any other Board member, staff member, parent or anyone else. Confidentiality, consistent with state and federal law, is expected in all situations. Board members shall respect and listen to ideas being presented by other Board members.

Board members fulfilling their responsibilities to their fullest potential shall be encouraged by each of the Directors. When receiving criticisms from parents or other interested parties about staff, the Board member shall direct the speaker to the Executive Director who shall process the criticism in a manner consistent with Board policies. Board members are expected to present a positive image of staff and Board members to the school community or parties outside the school community.

Board members will commit to resolving conflict directly with each other or with the appropriate staff member and not share the conflict with anyone outside of the conflict, including, but not limited to other parents, other staff members or the media.

Board members shall exemplify integrity, honesty and respect. A dedication and commitment to the vision of Innovation Academy and the charter school movement shall be the top priority for all

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Board members. Any Board member finding him or herself involved in an irresolvable conflict shall put the vision of the school first and step down from the Board.

Board members shall abide by the Open Meeting Law. The Opening Meeting Law states that anyone discussing Board business, policy, actions, resolutions, etc. with a quorum of the Board, except at regularly scheduled meetings, is illegal. A "meeting" is defined as communication of a quorum through person, telephone, e-mail, or any other means.

Board members missing more than two Board meetings a year shall be relieved of their Board involvement.

GOVERNANCE OF Innovation Academy

Innovation Academy shall be governed by a Board of Directors. The Executive Director of Innovation Academy shall answer directly to the Board and serve at the pleasure of the Board. The Director shall make decisions on a day-to-day basis and fulfill all administrative duties for the school. The Board will maintain the vision and steer the school's direction as it carries out the Mission Statement.

As with all charter schools, Innovation Academy is an entity separate from the school district in the area of governance. This unique characteristic of charters shall be guarded by each Board member.

If a Board Director questions a decision of the Executive Director, he or she shall immediately take that concern or disagreement to the administrator in a confidential and diplomatic format. Likewise, the Executive Director shall agree to the same commitment. Respect for each other shall remain constant.

While at the school, Board members shall be mindful of the different roles they play: parent, volunteer, Board member, etc. Board members will not use their position of authority while acting in their parent or volunteer roles. Board members shall foster good relationships with the administrator and staff on a personal level. With humility, each Board member will serve the best interests of the school.

Board members shall remember that stepping out of their advisory/Board capacity and attempting to run the school as an administrator will always cause problems.

The vision and mission statement of Innovation Academy will serve to guide and direct the Board of Directors. The goal to continually improve, maintain integrity, serve Innovation Academy families and ensure academic success for our students shall take precedence in all situations.

Signed, this _day of _____, 20____.

Board Member, Innovation Academy