

Lia Heath 2021 Board Candidate Statement

1. What do you hope to accomplish as a member of the NCS Board of Directors?

My hope as a board member is to ensure that we as a school are upholding the highest educational standards for our students, and doing so according to our mission & core principles. With respect, collaboration, creativity and the art of teaching, we are accountable for the results of our holistic and developmental approach. Keeping these guiding principles at the heart of our decision making enables us to best serve our community, staff and ultimately our students. After Covid 19 presented us with an extremely difficult year, we are faced with multiple exacerbated challenges including social/emotional issues, racial discrimination and learning loss. As we return to in-person classes after a year of remote and hybrid education, we have an opportunity during this transition to assess and make adjustments based on our learnings. My hope is that we at NCS can embrace this opportunity to face our challenges, grow, and come out stronger and better.

2. Please list the qualifications you would bring to the job (such as management skills, financial skills, fundraising experience, other Board memberships, and/or relevant volunteer activities).

I am finishing my first term on the Novato Charter School Board, and this application is to serve on the Board for a second term. I can say with experience that there is a learning curve in joining any Board and that is certainly true for NCS. Now that I am completing my first 3-year term, I feel like I have a solid understanding of our budget and its nuances, our Charter and our relationship with NUSD, the LCAP, as well as countless other policies, procedures and relevant aspects of maintaining a thriving Charter School. With this gained understanding I feel like I've hit my stride and can truly be an effective board member for the upcoming term.

In addition to the Board, I have also volunteered at NCS as a room parent, a class play coordinator, a field trip coordinator and several other jobs that keep me engaged with the students and teachers. My community involvement outside of NCS includes serving as a Board Member of the Novato Mother's Club and graduating with the 2019 Novato Leadership Class through the Novato Chamber of Commerce.

Outside of NCS, I have worked for over 20 years as an apparel designer for large outdoor and athleisure companies including The North Face and Athleta. I believe that with my design background I bring extensive experience in creative thinking and solution-oriented problem solving that brings a unique perspective and skill set the board room setting.

3. Please express something of your philosophy and vision regarding the NCS as a school guided by the Core Principles of Waldorf Education.

I was originally introduced to Waldorf Education by friends in the design industry who had their children in Waldorf-based programs. Based on their enthusiasm, I toured the Novato Charter School and was immediately impressed and drawn in by my observations. I remember being particularly impressed that the students wrote and illustrated their own textbooks – what a wonderful way to truly learn and understand a concept by creating it through your own eyes. I loved seeing the 6th graders speaking aloud in their classrooms with confidence and poise. I observed a level of engagement among both the teachers and students that I had not seen elsewhere.

While my initial love of Waldorf was instinctual, I have learned much more about the philosophies of Rudolf Steiner as my children have progressed through the grades. Each step of their education is thoroughly thought through and tied to the natural development of their minds, hearts and bodies. I love the unique methods that the Waldorf pedagogy uses to make these mind/heart/body connections – from imaginative stories of magical lands, to cooking and gardening, to weaving ribbons around the maypole. It is brilliant as a parent to see your 6-year-old son knitting a scarf or your 10-year-old daughter practicing the unicycle. I feel so fortunate to benefit from these enriching aspects of a Waldorf education and still be a part of the public school system. To me, the public Waldorf Charter arrangement provides the ideal educational platform for K-8 development.

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It has been a fulfilling role to serve as a Board Member for NCS and I hope to continue my tenure for the next term. As an involved parent of two students (4th & 6th grades), I have seen the benefits of our core principles in the education of our NCS students. After a difficult year, I believe that by following the guidance of these core principles, we can embrace our ever-changing world and come back stronger and better. I would be honored to continue to serve on the Board as a representative of our community.