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**Board of Directors Election
Voting Guide**

May 2025

This Voting Guide aims to introduce you to the St. Croix Preparatory Academy Board of Directors candidates. It will list the candidates and their qualifications and views.

Who can vote in this election?

SCPA defines a "Voter" as:

- All Employees. All employees (e.g., administration, faculty members, educational assistants, food service, etc.), excluding employees contracted via external organizations;
- Parents/Legal Guardians. All parents/legal guardians, with a limit of two votes per family.

The election will be held online via Simply Voting from Monday to Tuesday, May 12-13, 2025. Please look for more information in the Prep Weekly and on stcroixprep.org.

This election is legal and binding. By choosing qualified candidates, you will help St. Croix Preparatory Academy meet the challenges that face the school in the coming years.

St. Croix Prep School Board Candidates

Voters will choose:

2 faculty candidates

1 parent candidate

Alexander “Al” Bagwell – Faculty Member**Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?**

Serving on the Board of Directors is an opportunity to help serve the school’s mission: develop academics, character, and leadership in our students with an education grounded in the classical tradition. I want to serve on the Board because I plan to be a member of the Prep community for years to come, and I want to have a hand in shaping its future. I am a firm believer in the classical model of education, and I want to make sure that the policies of St. Croix Preparatory Academy continue to reflect that aspect of its mission.

What areas of expertise would you bring to St. Croix Preparatory Academy?

Before becoming a teacher, I practiced as an attorney for three years. I switched careers and taught for over seven years at another classical charter school in Minnesota. As a teacher in a classical school, I have taught at all three levels in the Trivium: grammar, logic, and rhetoric. Together, these experiences in my background have provided me with years of experience interpreting rules and statutes, as well as implementing a classical model of education focused on the Trivium.

What aspects of St. Croix Prep do you believe are the most important to maintain?

It has been obvious since my first day at Prep that the culture and sense of community are special. There is a mutual trust among the administration, staff, and families that gives all parties confidence in the school’s mission. It is important to maintain this sense of community in order to continue the success of the school for generations to come.

What strategic issues do you believe need to be addressed by the Board of Directors in the next few years?

The most important strategic issue the Board must address is retaining its teachers and staff to continue the mission of the school. Teachers, in particular, are responsible for the direct implementation of the school’s mission to develop academics, character, and leadership. My experience at Prep has shown me that the quality of the teachers and administration is of the highest caliber. They are passionate and supportive of both their students and each other. The continuing success of the school depends on the retention and recruitment of passionate, dedicated teachers.

Which of the board committees (e.g., Governance, Succession Planning, and/or Finance) would you be willing to serve on to address the strategic issues of the School?

I believe I could best serve the school as a member of the Governance Committee. The Governance Committee is responsible for making sure that the Board stays updated on and follows all state and federal laws. Those state and federal laws are changing rapidly, and my previous experience as an attorney will help to navigate those changes.

I would also be willing to serve on the Board’s Finance Committee. I have experience serving as the treasurer for the Classical Association of Minnesota, a Minnesota non-profit, for five years.

Kate Gilman – Faculty Member**Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?**

I'm interested in serving on the board because I genuinely want to see our school continue to thrive in the years to come. As a teacher and a parent, I'm deeply invested in the success of this community, not only professionally, but personally. St. Croix Prep has given me and my family a strong sense of belonging, and I would be honored to give back in a meaningful way.

During this time of transition, I hope to provide both stability and vision. I want to help sustain the purpose that already guides the school, as well as foster a sense of optimism and excitement for the future. Serving on the board is a way for me to contribute to the school's long-term success and ensure that it continues to be a place where students, families, and staff can flourish.

What areas of expertise would you bring to St. Croix Preparatory Academy?

I have been an educator for nearly fifteen years, but have been passionate about education my whole life. Over the past seven years, I have had the privilege to serve in a variety of roles at St. Croix Prep, including as a Lower School Education Assistant, a Special Education Case Manager, and currently as the Upper School World History teacher. I also lead the Humanities Professional Learning Community (PLC), and I am grateful for the opportunities that the school has given me to continue to grow as a school leader. It is a gift to work alongside colleagues who are equally committed to helping students thrive and continually growing as educators.

I wholeheartedly love being a teacher. I was honored to receive the Student Choice Award from last year's graduating class—an especially meaningful recognition because it reflected the relationships I've built not only with students, but also with their families. That sense of connection and mutual trust is something I truly value, and it's one of the reasons I feel so fortunate to be part of St. Croix Prep.

I'm also a parent to two current Prep students—Lilian (3rd grade) and Liam (6th grade)—and I continue to be impressed by the education they receive. As a lifelong learner with a background in the liberal arts and a Master's in Education, I appreciate the school's emphasis on deep knowledge, thoughtful inquiry, and critical thinking.

This range of experience has given me a well-rounded perspective on our school's culture, curriculum, and the needs of our students, staff, and parents across each division. I'm committed to serving our entire community with empathy, insight, and a collaborative spirit.

What aspects of St. Croix Prep do you believe are the most important to maintain?

Of course, our commitment to classical education shapes the identity of the school and should be preserved. The focus on critical thinking, character development, and a rich, academic curriculum provides students with a strong intellectual and ethical foundation that will serve them for life.

Another aspect that I am passionate about maintaining is the small-school environment. The size of our school allows for relationships to naturally extend beyond the classroom. Students, families, and staff get to know one another in meaningful ways. That sense of connection creates a true community - one that goes far beyond the traditional school experience.

What strategic issues do you believe need to be addressed by the Board of Directors in the next few years?

Looking ahead, I believe the Board will need to thoughtfully navigate several important strategic issues. One of the most immediate is the transition in school leadership. Ensuring stability, clear communication, and a shared vision during this time is essential for maintaining the trust and momentum the school has built over the years.

Another key area is financial sustainability. Like many charter schools, St. Croix Prep may face funding challenges in the coming years, especially as public education funding structures may shift. The Board will need to be proactive in planning for long-term financial health while continuing to support the high-quality programs and staff that define our school.

Finally, as our broader community continues to grow and change, I believe it's important for St. Croix Prep to continue fostering a strong sense of belonging for all families. Our classical model and K-12 structure provide a solid foundation for that connection. With thoughtful leadership, we can ensure that every family who walks through our doors feels welcomed, valued, and supported as part of our community.

Addressing these issues with intention and care will help us preserve what makes Prep special while preparing for a strong and vibrant future.

Which of the board committees (e.g., Governance, Succession Planning, and/or Finance) would you be willing to serve on to address the strategic issues of the School?

I'm willing to serve wherever the Board feels my skills and perspective would be most helpful. That said, I'm particularly interested in the Governance Committee. I believe that thoughtful, transparent governance will be vital in the years ahead, and I would be honored to help guide the school with honesty, integrity, and a shared commitment to the well-being of the school community.

Heidi Gonzalez – Faculty Member**Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?**

Coming to St. Croix Preparatory Academy four years ago, I immediately felt the difference from other academy institutions I've taught at. The integrity, environment, academic rigor, and sense of community make this a unique environment and one I believe strongly in being an integral part of. Contributing to this school daily in the classroom fulfills me as a teacher, and I am eager to assume a more significant role.

What areas of expertise would you bring to St. Croix Preparatory Academy?

As a music specialist in the lower school, I have the unique perspective of working with all elementary school families and lower school staff. Additionally, I have worked collaboratively with middle and upper school staff through weekly PLC (Professional Learning Community) meetings, concert collaborations, and extra-curricular activities. I am also a parent of a SPCA sophomore. Transferring my son to this school was one of the best decisions my family made, and it gives me further insight into our school community at large.

I am comfortable working closely with both small and large groups on established projects as well as introducing new initiatives that require multiple layers of involvement across duties and titles. In over twenty years of teaching, I've gained perspective on how to engage others in open and genuine dialogue to move ideas and work forward. I've been involved in a start-up charter school, which has given me experience in the business side of the classroom, and I ran my own private lesson business prior to coming to SPCA. Since being on SPCA staff, I have been successful at bolstering community and school engagement by bringing the Lower School Theatre in-house and starting an extra-curricular choir.

What aspects of St. Croix Prep do you believe are the most important to maintain?

One of the most important aspects to maintain is the student-centric environment where students are allowed to thrive as individuals, which aligns with the mission of the school. From academic rigor to character building, it's apparent that decisions are made on a large scale for what is best for the student. Keeping the students at the center of decision making, whether it's an academic issue, a financial issue, or a new initiative, ensures well-thought-out reasoning and maintains the integrity of the school overall.

What strategic issues do you believe need to be addressed by the Board of Directors in the next few years?

Strategically, I believe it's going to be important to maintain smooth operations through this time of transition with a new Executive Director entering SPCA. As a board, it will be imperative to maintain the mission of the school while being open to new ideas. Additionally, supporting the Foundation will be critical to the strategic planning that will keep SPCA successful for years to come.

Which of the board committees (e.g., Governance, Succession Planning, and/or Finance) would you be willing to serve on to address the strategic issues of the School?

While I'm open to serving on any committee, I believe my experience and skill set, as well as my strongest interest, lie in being a Foundation Liaison. As I get more familiar with the work of the Board, I'm certain I will align with additional work and committees.

Kirsten Osberghaus – Faculty Member**Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?**

As a teacher with 11 years of experience at St. Croix Prep, I've seen firsthand the impact school board decisions have on students, teachers, and families. I'm running for the Board of Directors because I believe every student deserves access to a high-quality education, and every educator deserves the support and resources to make that possible. My goal is to bring a teacher's perspective, shaped by firsthand experience with our school's unique challenges and opportunities, to the table, while also honoring and balancing the perspectives of our students and families.

What areas of expertise would you bring to St. Croix Preparatory Academy?

I bring strong foundational knowledge of education and the curriculum of the early grades, as well as a deep understanding of how to support learners at a critical stage in their development. I've served as a Professional Learning Community (PLC) leader, working with colleagues to analyze student data, align instruction, and drive continuous academic growth. I've also had the privilege of mentoring and training new teachers. Those experiences have deepened my commitment to building a strong, supportive school community and investing in educator development. These roles have given me a

well-rounded perspective on what students and staff need to succeed, and I'm eager to bring that knowledge to the board to help shape thoughtful decisions that will benefit Prep.

What aspects of St. Croix Prep do you believe are the most important to maintain?

At the heart of St. Croix Prep is a commitment to rigorous, classical education. This is an approach that challenges students to think critically, communicate effectively, and engage deeply with timeless ideas. Preserving this academic rigor is essential, but so is staying true to our school's mission: fostering growth in academics, character, and leadership. These three pillars work together to shape students who are not only well-educated but also grounded in integrity and prepared for life.

Equally important is maintaining a strong, connected community where families, teachers, and students feel valued and supported. Central to that is teacher retention. When we support and invest in our educators, we build stability and consistency for students and strengthen the overall culture of our school. As a board member, I would advocate for policies that uphold St. Croix Prep's classical foundation, support our staff, and ensure every student thrives.

What strategic issues do you believe need to be addressed by the Board of Directors in the next few years?

In the coming years, one of the most important strategic priorities for the Board will be supporting and onboarding our new Executive Director. Strong, consistent leadership is essential to maintaining our school's mission and culture, and the Board has a critical role to play in ensuring a smooth transition, offering guidance, and continuing to establish a collaborative, long-term vision for success.

Another pressing issue is teacher retention and compensation. Our educators are the foundation of everything we do, and to keep exceptional teachers in the classroom, we must remain competitive in both salary and support. Investing in teacher development, well-being, and recognition is not only strategic, it's essential for the health and continuity of our academic programs.

Which of the board committees (e.g., Governance, Succession Planning, and/or Finance) would you be willing to serve on to address the strategic issues of the School?

I'm open to serving on any committee where I can best support the school's strategic goals.

Madelyn Adams – Parent**Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?**

As both a mom and juvenile law attorney, I've witnessed firsthand how the decisions we make for our kids today can shape the course of their future. Saint Croix Prep was founded on the belief that when students feel valued and challenged, they rise to meet the high expectations we set. Our students continue to prove this true every day. I chose Saint Croix Prep for my kids because I wanted a school environment where they had the chance to explore different interests, challenge themselves academically, and learn the important lessons of what it means to be a good friend, a contributing citizen, and a kind leader. As a school board member, I'll be dedicated to helping our system evolve with these core values always at the heart.

I want to serve on the school board to ensure that Saint Croix Prep's focus on classical education, character, and leadership continues to set our children up for happy and successful lives in a rapidly changing world.

What areas of expertise would you bring to St. Croix Preparatory Academy?

As a Senior Attorney in Youth Justice and Wellness, I bring a strong mix of leadership, collaboration, and problem-solving experience to the Saint Croix Prep School Board. I lead a team focused on supporting children's mental, social, and academic needs, and I work closely with schools, community organizations, businesses, and government partners to identify challenges and create effective solutions. I'm well-versed in legal and regulatory issues, tight budgets, grant applications, and creative funding strategies, all of which directly support the board's role in ensuring accountability and sustainability. I've also partnered with school leaders among various districts to implement safety protocols and conflict resolution strategies that create supportive, respectful learning environments. As a parent and a public servant, I'm deeply committed to helping our school grow while keeping students' well-being and success at the center of every decision.

What aspects of St. Croix Prep do you believe are the most important to maintain?

The greatest strength of St. Croix Prep is the clarity of its mission. For more than twenty years, the school has remained focused on developing each student's academic potential, personal character, and leadership qualities through a rigorous, content-rich education grounded in classical tradition. The balance of strong academics, intentional character-building, and leadership development is what makes our school truly unique. Maintaining this philosophy—where deep learning is paired with the growth of students as kind, capable, and responsible people—is essential to who we are.

As a parent of a first grader, with a three-year-old who will be joining soon, I deeply value this consistency and intentionality. The classical curriculum equips students to think critically, write clearly, and speak with purpose, which are skills that serve them well beyond the classroom. That focus on meaningful learning, rather than test performance alone, is something I strongly believe in and want to help preserve.

Just as important is the culture. Our staff are not only knowledgeable but accessible, engaged, and deeply invested in every student's success. That level of care is something we can't take for granted.

As a board member, I'm committed to preserving and strengthening what makes St. Croix Prep exceptional.

What strategic issues do you believe need to be addressed by the Board of Directors in the next few years?

One of our key priorities must be supporting the successful onboarding of our new Executive Director, Dr. Jennifer Fuchs. Strong leadership transitions are essential to maintaining the school's mission and culture, and the board plays a critical role in ensuring that the process is thoughtful, intentional, and well-supported.

Additionally, in light of proposed funding cuts to Minnesota charter schools, especially in areas like long-term facilities maintenance and special education, the board must also pursue new, sustainable revenue sources. Whether through a dedicated development office, grant opportunities, or strategic partnerships, we need creative, forward-thinking solutions to protect the programs and people that set St. Croix Prep apart. Expanding public awareness and understanding of our school will be key to cultivating those opportunities.

Maintaining our exceptional staff remains equally important. The talent and dedication of our educators and support teams are a major reason families choose St. Croix Prep. The board must continue to support strategies that attract, develop, and retain top-tier professionals.

These priorities are all about preserving what makes St. Croix Prep so special, while preparing wisely and strategically for the future. I'm committed to helping lead that work with purpose, transparency, and confidence.

Which of the board committees (e.g., Governance, Succession Planning, and/or Finance) would you be willing to serve on to address the strategic issues of the School?

Governance.

Jonathan Kish – Parent**Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?**

I am deeply committed to the SCPA community, not only as a lifelong member of our local area and a dedicated advocate for quality education, but also as a parent who is beginning a long and meaningful journey with the school. Although this is my first year as part of the SCPA community, my enthusiasm and involvement have been immediate and impactful. I currently have a 10th-grade student and another child joining as a 9th grader next year—and I already envision our youngest, now 3 years old, becoming part of the SCPA experience when the time is right.

My active contributions in the early days of my SCPA experience have included support for key community events like the annual School Carnival and the Uniform Collection and Sale, as well as active participation on the Finance Committee and within the Parent Group. These experiences have given me a firsthand look at how collaborative efforts between parents, educators, and administrators can create a dynamic, inclusive learning environment. I am passionately driven by the opportunity to work closely with all SCPA stakeholders so that our collective decisions empower

every student to achieve their unique potential. This board service is not a mere appointment—it is a chance to contribute to a legacy of excellence and ensure that our future strategies reflect the shared values and high aspirations of our school community.

What areas of expertise would you bring to St. Croix Preparatory Academy?

I bring a robust and multifaceted set of skills developed over more than 20 years in the financial industry, combined with a thorough understanding of educational governance and community engagement. Academically, I hold an MBA and dual undergraduate degrees in Finance and Economics. This solid academic foundation has been sharpened with over two decades of professional experience, which most recently has included partnering with large healthcare organizations across the nation. In these roles, I have been responsible for managing complex, multi-stakeholder transactions that demand detailed negotiations, strategic planning, and the ability to coordinate among diverse groups. These challenges required a deep level of collaboration and meticulous attention to detail—skills that are directly transferable to overseeing SCPA's fiscal planning and strategic development.

Furthermore, my leadership roles as PTA president and co-president at local schools have enriched my understanding of how educational systems operate from the ground up. These positions have enabled me to appreciate the nuances of educational governance and the importance of clear, effective communication among all stakeholders. I am eager to bring this combination of financial expertise, strategic problem-solving ability, and collaborative leadership to the SCPA Board so that our financial and academic decisions are well-aligned with the exceptional educational vision that SCPA upholds.

What aspects of St. Croix Prep do you believe are the most important to maintain?

SCPA's enduring strength is built on its unwavering commitment to unlocking the potential of every student. This mission is supported by a progressive academic philosophy that places high importance on creativity, personalized learning, and rigorous academic standards. Equally, the school's nurturing culture—one that unites parents, educators, and students in a meaningful, collaborative partnership—is a cornerstone of its success. It is this culture, driven by shared values and mutual respect, that helps transform educational challenges into opportunities for growth and innovation.

In addition, maintaining responsible financial stewardship is critical. Ensuring that resources are allocated effectively and reinvested in enhancing student programs is essential to sustaining the high-quality education SCPA is known for. Together, these core aspects—the commitment to individualized student growth, a progressive and supportive educational environment, and prudent financial management—form the backbone of SCPA’s identity. Upholding and continually strengthening these elements is vital for preserving the school’s reputation and ensuring its continued success for future generations.

What strategic issues do you believe need to be addressed by the Board of Directors in the next few years?

One of SCPA’s most notable strengths is the strong demand for enrollment, as evidenced by an annual waiting list that exceeds 800 students. This remarkable level of interest reflects the school’s outstanding reputation but also presents several strategic challenges that require our collective focus. To address this, it is essential for the Board to evaluate and adopt a unified and forward-looking strategy that considers several critical areas:

- **Financial Planning:** Given this high demand, it is critical that we develop sustainable, long-term fiscal strategies that can support potential expansion while maintaining financial stability. A detailed evaluation of budgeting needs and growth scenarios will provide the financial foundation required to underwrite any future expansion or enhancement efforts.
- **Staffing and Facilities:** An increasing student body will require corresponding investments in staffing and infrastructure. A strategic review of our current resources, along with plans to bolster staff numbers and upgrade facilities where necessary, will ensure that SCPA continues to provide a high-quality educational experience.
- **Curriculum Enhancements:** While exploring innovative practices is important, our focus should remain on continually refining our academic programs to meet the evolving needs of a diverse student population. This means regularly evaluating and adjusting curricula to ensure that we offer a balanced, rigorous, and inclusive educational experience.

By engaging in an open dialogue with administrators, educators, parents, and students, the Board can collectively formulate strategies that not only manage the challenges brought on by high demand but also position SCPA for a future marked by excellence and innovation.

Which of the board committees (e.g., Governance, Succession Planning, and/or Finance) would you be willing to serve on to address the strategic issues of the School?

I am currently an active member of SCPA’s Finance Committee, where I apply my extensive expertise in financial management and strategic planning. With my MBA, dual undergraduate degrees in Finance and Economics, and over two decades of experience in navigating complex financial transactions, I have been instrumental in ensuring that our school’s fiscal policies are sound and forward-thinking. This background has provided me with the insight to safeguard SCPA’s financial integrity while planning for sustainable growth.

Beyond my role on the Finance Committee, I am enthusiastic about expanding my service to include the Governance and Succession Planning committees if and when desired. My experience includes orchestrating multi-party engagements and leading governance initiatives that foster clear communication and strategic collaboration. I look forward to forming strong partnerships with SCPA’s administrative leadership—especially with the newly appointed Executive Director, Dr. Jennifer Fuchs—and working closely with teachers, parents, and students. This approach will help us address both immediate priorities and long-term challenges, ensuring a seamless transition for future leadership and maintaining the school’s proud tradition of excellence. Together, our combined efforts can create a resilient framework for SCPA that supports its ongoing mission and values.



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St. Croix Preparatory Academy Mission Statement

St. Croix Preparatory Academy will develop each student's academic potential, personal character, and leadership qualities through an academically rigorous and content rich educational program grounded in a classical tradition.

**Write-In Candidate Request for
St. Croix Preparatory Academy
Board of Directors**

This request must be signed by the candidate.

I, _____, request that all write-in votes cast for me for the St. Croix Preparatory Academy Board of Directors during the election on May 12-13, 2025, be counted in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 204B.09, subd. 3.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

This form must be received by noon on Friday, May 9, 2025
for write-in votes to be counted separately.

Submit this form to: Susan Peterson at
susanpeterson@stcroixprep.org