

The Trustees in attendance: Rick Rieder, Ezdehar Abuhatab, Nicole Bearce, Ravi Bellur, Ann Borowiec, Steve Creekmur, Lawrence Evans, Thomas Redburn, Trisha Scipio, Scott Sleyster and Jamey Verrilli.

Also present: Julie Jackson, Maya Roth- Bisignano, Timeese Townes-Pratt, Brett Peiser, Mike Mann, John Powell, Jenn Da Silva, Nevaeh Fields, Roydon Pellew, Amethyst Charette, Patrick Rametti, Ayomide Aloa, Praise Fakorede, Zahnai Holten, Heaven Koonce, and Darnell Durham .

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Mr. Rieder who noted that the meeting had been duly publicized, as required by law, in *The Star-Ledger* and *The Americano* with updated address information posted on the North Star Academy website.

Ms. Borowiec moved to approve the following minutes. Ms. Scipio seconded the motion:

- Approval of 5/20/25 Public Session Minutes
- Approval of 5/20/25 Executive Session Minutes

The trustees voted unanimously in approval.

Ms. Roth opened the meeting on a joyful note by sharing a highlight reel from the Class of 2025 Signing Day. She reported that North Star Academy is closing the school year with 291 graduates, who collectively earned \$9.8 million in scholarships and grants, received 2,066 college acceptances, and included 1 Posse Scholar, 2 Cooperman Scholars, and 11 QuestBridge Scholars.

Ms. Roth noted that Elected Official Larry Crump and Newark Board of Education Vice President Allison K. James-Frison attended Signing Day. Ms. James-Frison described the ceremony as “powerful and inspiring.”

She also recognized NSA alumni Madison Gilmore and Elias Stevens, who were hired as official photographers for the event.

Ms. Roth provided the board with an overview of this year’s valedictorians and salutatorians:

- Washington Park High School
 - Valedictorians: Moboluwaduro Fola-Akintola (Rice University), Ayomide Alao (Wesleyan University)
 - Salutatorian: Darshana Suresh (Princeton University)
- Lincoln Park High School
 - Valedictorian: David Okunola (Wesleyan University)
 - Salutatorians: Blessing Nwafor (Bowdoin College), Dominion Adeniyi-Idowu (Williams College)

Ms. Da Silva provided updates on the ELL graduation ceremony at LiFT. Parents expressed great pride in their accomplishments, and based on the success of this initiative, the team plans to pilot two sites in SY25-26.

Ms. Da Silva also highlighted outreach efforts in the East Ward. She praised the NSA Cheerleaders

for participating in the first Portuguese Parade and shared a photo of the new North Star banner that will be displayed in the area to increase community visibility.

Ms. Roth introduced our Alumni Success Coaches —Royden Pellew and Amethyst Charette—who presented to the Board on the state of Alumni Support at North Star Academy.

Mr. Pellew shared that NSA alumni persist in 4-year colleges at a rate 8% higher than students from the top income quartile nationwide. The Alumni Support Team focuses on academic assistance, socio-emotional support, financial aid, and career guidance.

This past year, efforts were focused on:

1. Strengthening student purpose and voice
2. Improving college application quality
3. Enhancing post-graduation handoff to ensure strong college matriculation
4. Re-engaging alumni who had stopped out or never enrolled

The team conducted transition meetings with every senior to prepare them for alumni support services.

This year at LPHS, we focused on strengthening alumni engagement and providing meaningful college preparation experiences for our students. New initiatives such as the Alumni Day Student Committee, and the Alumni Lunch Speaker Series in the fall and spring, created multiple touchpoints for alumni to engage with current students. Additionally, the Alumni Impact Team hosted a focus group to gather alumni feedback, all contributing to our ongoing commitment to leveraging alumni voices to foster a strong college-going culture and support long-term student success.

Each semester, the Alumni Support Program offers financial assistance to our alumni community, including \$200 Barnes & Noble gift cards for textbooks, other course-related supplies, and laptops.

With over \$33k in micro grant funding, it is evident that our alumni view this as a much-needed resource.

Each semester, we live out the mission of *To and Through College* by helping alumni with outstanding balances persist through college via our Persistence Grant Initiative. To be eligible, alumni must have taken out their subsidized and unsubsidized loans and present a realistic plan to cover any remaining balance after we contribute up to \$1,200. Between the two semesters, we provided over \$22K in funding to support alumni persistence.

Each semester, we identify and support alumni with re-enrollment. This year, we successfully re-enrolled 26 alumni into 2- or 4-year colleges based on their unique circumstances.

Mr. Pellew spotlighted several alumni making significant contributions in college and beyond:

- Joan Oserogho ('21): Alice DeSimone Leadership Award recipient
- Olumayowa Otunga ('20): Software Engineering intern at Jasfel Analytics; member of ColorStack (a community for Black and Latinx Computer Science students).
- Ayokunumi Ajikobi ('21): Research intern, Biology Club secretary

- Sean Odom ('21): VP of Northeastern Black Student Association and Chair of the Student Ambassador Program at The Possible Zone.
- Marttina Nimako ('21): Clinical experience in both the NICU and Labor & Delivery units at Beth Israel Medical Center
- Cyreema Marshal ('21): Through the Elevate+ program, she completed two internships: Administrative Intern at Discovery Orchestra and Production Assistant at HTTV.
- Stephanie Cholotio ('21): Braven Capstone with Philadelphia 76ers to explore strategies for increasing engagement with their mobile app.
- Jessica Aimunmondion ('21): Graduated cum laude from Syracuse; pursuing graduate degree in Applied Data Science.
- Kymani Fraser ('21): served as a Strategy Analyst, Consulting Intern, and conducted research in Stem Cell and Regenerative Biology. Since graduating, he has secured a position as Marketing Director at Swipefolio.
- Mekhi Addison ('21): Having earned her International Studies degree, she will travel to Hawaii for environmental volunteer work.

Mr. Pellew updated our board on what some of our Alumni are doing beyond their college graduations.

- Vaughn Corrothers ('19): After graduating with a B.S in Applied Data Science and Statistics, he is preparing to enter the UK tech industry.
- Kayana Gayle ('21): From student-athlete to social work professional — Kayana Gayle ('21) balanced academics, soccer, and an internship with St. Joseph Health, where she now works full-time as a Senior Child Care Worker. This fall, she'll begin her Master's in Social Work at Montclair State.
- Michael Nyantakyi ('19): One year after earning his engineering degree, is returning home to join the City of Newark Department of Water & Sewer Utilities as an Environmental Engineer.
- Ogechukwo Ibida ('17): Recently earned her Master's at UPenn to continue advancing equity and research in education.

To conclude his presentation, Mr. Pellew presented findings from a study conducted by Bain & Company and the Charter School Growth Fund. Among 104 surveyed Uncommon alumni (Classes of 2017–2019):

- 94% matriculated to college
- 83% are employed full-time
- 86% of bachelor's degree holders are employed full-time
- Top career fields: Education, Business, and Legal Services

The study affirmed that academic preparation is the #1 driver of success, and career exploration must begin earlier in students' journeys. Bachelors Degree holders and those with advanced degrees are earning more than those who do not earn a Bachelor's degree..

Mr. Mann then introduced six seniors to present their North Star reflections to the board. Ayomide Aloa, Darnell Durham, Praise Fakorede, Nevaeh Fields, Zahnai Holten, and Heaven Koonce each spoke about the opportunities they embraced during their time at North Star and offered thoughtful feedback on how to enhance future student experiences, particularly around AP course offerings.

Mr. Rieder asked for a motion to go into executive session. A motion was made to move to an executive session by Mr. Evans and seconded by Mr. Redburn. The trustees voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:21 pm to discuss legal matters, personnel and real estate.

At the end of the executive session, a motion was made by Mr. Evans and then seconded by Mr. Bellur to return to the public session. The trustees voted unanimously to return to the public session at 7:36 pm.

Ms. Roth opened the floor to public comments. There were no public comments.

Ms. Roth then presented the following Personnel items to the board for approval:

- *2.1 SY25-26 Returner NSA Salaries*
- *2.2 NSA Personnel Report*
- *2.3 NSA New Hires for SY25-26*

A motion was made by Mr. Sleyster and seconded by Mr. Bellur to approve the personnel items. The trustees voted unanimously to approve.

Ms. Roth then presented the following Finance and Facilities items to the board for approval:

- *3.1 Resolution for FY 25-26 NSA Final Budget*
- *3.2 Resolution for FY 25-26 NSA Max Travel Budget*
- *3.3 Resolution to Change Bank Signatory*
- *3.4 25-26 SBA Consultant Agreement*
- *3.5 Resolution for PO Approval by Chief Real Estate Officer*
- *3.6 Resolution for PO Approval in the Summer*
- *3.7 Resolution for Self Funded Insurance Invoice Approvals*
- *3.8 Resolution for FY25 Auditor Appt w-fees*
- *3.9 Resolution for FY25 SBA Appt*
- *3.10 North Star 24-25 Annual Fiscal Questionnaire*

A motion was made by Mr. Sleyster and seconded by Mr. Redburn to approve the finance and facilities items. The trustees voted unanimously to approve the financial resolutions.

Ms. Roth shared Administrative Resolutions for board approval.

- *4.1 Resolution for Comprehensive Equity Plan Submission*
- *4.2 Resolution to Accept NJSIG Safety Grant Funds 2025*
- *4.3 Resolution to Approve the 25-26 Student and Family Handbook*
- *4.4 Preliminary Resolution to Award and Execute Food Service Contract 2025-26*
- *4.5 Resolution to Approve 25-26 Board Dates*
- *4.6 HIB Report*

A motion was made by Mr. Evans and seconded by Mr. Verrilli to approve the administrative items. The trustees voted unanimously to approve the administrative resolutions.

A motion was made by Ms. Scipio and seconded by Mr. Verrilli to uphold the recommendations of the Student Hearing Committee.

A motion was made to adjourn by Mr. Verrilli and seconded by Mr. Bellur to adjourn the board of trustees meeting. The trustees voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:50p.m.

