

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
NORTHSTAR ACADEMIES, INC.  
February 18, 2025**

A meeting of the Governing Board of NorthStar Academies, Inc. was held on Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 4:30 PM. This Meeting was held at Sandra Marie High School, located at 424 W Sunrise Blvd, FL 33311.

The following Governing Board Members appeared virtually *via Zoom*: Chairperson, Ms. Beth Adelman; Vice Chair, Mr. Robert Holland; Board Treasurer, Mr. Ira Paul; Board Secretary, Mr. Douglas Shelton; and Member, Mr. Martin Burkett.

The following guests also appeared *via Zoom*: Thom Jackson, Chief Executive Officer, EdisonLearning; Dr. Eunice Casey, Vice President of Operations, EdisonLearning; Dr. Sharard Walker, Vice President of Strategic Growth and Development, NorthStar Academies, Inc; Jeff Wood, Tripp Scott, LLP; Dr. Tony Arza; Arza and Associates; Susan DeAngelo, Talent Acquisition Specialist, EdisonLearning; Nia Bridges, Executive Assistant, EdisonLearning; Dr. Theola Moore, Principal, Chambers High School; Alejandro Madrigal, Principal, CG Bethel High School; Dr. Dwayne Stewart, Principal, Palm Beach Preparatory Charter Academy; Kerry-Ann Brammer, Principal, Andrews High School; Alexandra Plaza, Principal, Main Street High School; Charmayne Joseph, Principal, Sandra Marie Curtis High School; Chris Skierski, Principal, Palm Beach Preparatory Charter Academy, Middle School; and Debra Bele, Osceola School District.

The meeting was called to order at 4:31 p.m. The meeting was chaired by the Board Chairperson, Ms. Beth Adelman. Ms. Nia Bridges recorded the Minutes and conducted a roll call. Ms. Adelman noted that Mr. Robert Holland, Mr. Ira Paul, Mr. Douglas Shelton, and Mr. Martin Burkett were present. Following the roll call, a quorum was present.

There were no requests for public comment.

On a motion by Mr. Paul and seconded by Mr. Holland, the Board unanimously agreed to approve the January Board Meeting Minutes.

On a motion by Mr. Paul and seconded by Mr. Holland, the Board unanimously agreed to approve the consent items as presented.

Governance Matters was briefly discussed by Thomas Sternberg who covered several key governance matters, including updates on board policies. A recommendation was made to schedule a workshop before the next board meeting to review the proposed policies, which aim to streamline processes related to records, meetings, and responses. Moreover, regarding litigation, two outstanding tax matters in Broward and Palm Beach are progressing, with further details to be discussed in a private individual session with board members. While an employment matter involving a whistleblower complaint is being managed by insurance counsel. In the Pinellas tax matter, a summary judgment was entered in favor of the property appraiser against North Star Academy LLC, with no enforcement against North Star Academies, Inc.

Mr. Sternberg's office also reviewed and recommended the Arza Consulting Services Agreement, aligning the termination clause with Edison Learning's, and approved it. This agreement formalizes the services provided by the consulting group for at least 10 years, including strategic assistance, crisis management, and reporting to the board. The board policies will be reviewed during the board retreat, eliminating the need for a separate meeting, with policies being provided to the board in advance.

On a motion by Mr. Holland and seconded by Mr. Paul, the Board unanimously agreed to approve the Arza Consulting Services Agreement.

In terms of Stakeholder updates Dr. Walker informed the Board with several key updates and initiatives. The

Growth Initiatives Update highlighted Palm Beach State College's consideration of a new location in the northern part of the county and the exploration of potential synergies in the central part of the state, nearing Osceola, Orange and Polk County. Furthermore, The Cognia Task Force team attended the Cognia conference in Orlando, with Dr. Casey leading efforts to secure network accreditation for NorthStar Academies. Regarding the Dan Marino Foundation MOU, the collaboration focuses on workforce development, with the "Ready 2 Be" tool providing customizable tracking of Career Technical Education (CTE) completions, assessments, and job readiness. The Executive Strategic Planning Session emphasized the future direction of Northstar, with a focus on sustaining high-quality education. The findings from this session will be presented at the upcoming Board Retreat, which is scheduled for March 1, 2025, from 9 AM to 1 PM at EdisonLearning headquarters.

Dr. Arza presented the Board with the legislative update. The Federal Department of Education has clarified language around Title programs and funding to ensure equitable allocation to charter schools. Additionally, an Executive Order from January 29 empowers local attorneys general to collaborate with the U.S. Attorney General in cases where laws are not being followed, with Florida's Attorney General emphasizing education's role in teaching students how to think, not what to think. A key point of discussion included the importance of following Florida laws, avoiding controversial issues to stay off the radar, and the potential strategic allocation of funding to schools of choice. There are ongoing efforts to clean up accountability for HB1 school vouchers, focusing on spending and program selection. District concerns about excessive testing, such as PM1, are being reviewed, although substantial changes are not expected immediately.

A question by Mr. Holland regarding what can be taught by teachers in the school systems prompted discussion among the board members. In the context of political shifts, Dr. Arza emphasized the importance of open dialogue in navigating educational policies while complying with laws. In order to move on to finance reports, this item was tabled and this discussion would continue at the Board Retreat.

Ms. Schmitt provided the Board with a review of the financial reports and updates for the following NorthStar Academies:

1. Andrews High School
2. CG Bethel High School
3. Chambers High School
4. Main Street High School
5. Palm Beach Preparatory Charter Academy
6. Palm Beach Preparatory Charter Academy Middle School
7. Sandra Marie Curtis High School

During the meeting, Mr. Holland raised several questions regarding the turnaround efforts at Chambers and the new middle school component. Specifically, Mr. Holland inquired about the actions being taken to address challenges at Chambers, the lessons learned from those challenges to prevent similar issues at other schools, and how the district plans to mitigate concerns at the middle school. Additionally, he asked whether the NSA network is competitive enough in attracting teachers and if there are strategies to improve recruitment for the upcoming school year.

In response, Dr. Casey was able to discuss the Enrollment Efforts and Stakeholder plans. A proactive approach for the new school year includes targeted advertising and reconnecting with feeder schools. An analysis revealed changes in leadership at key feeder schools, which necessitates intentional outreach. The goal is to make Chambers the school of choice for students requiring additional support. Aggressive enrollment efforts are underway for the middle school, focusing on community engagement, with joint efforts from Dr. Casey's and Dr. Walker's office to implement plans and prevent a similar situation to last year's October count.

Furthermore Dr. Casey addressed open positions and clarified that decisions on filling roles are being made based on class size to maintain curriculum quality. HR is implementing recruitment strategies, including sign-on bonuses, to attract teachers, while also reviewing salaries to ensure competitiveness with other districts. With a shortage of certified teachers, the focus is on recruiting trainable candidates and providing professional development, mentoring, and coaching to support new teachers and promote long-term retention.

Regarding teacher salaries, it was noted that most partnered districts, except Osceola (Main Street High School), have referendum dollars that help supplement salaries, ensuring competitiveness.

Principal Moore brought the Chambers Improvement Plan to the board's attention. Dr. Moore is working with senior leadership to address the school's shortfalls, with initiatives underway to improve performance. Dr. Moore assured the board that Chambers will work to reach its goals and will collaborate with Dr. Casey and Dr. Walker on further initiatives.

A complete copy of the financial reports for each school was included in the Board packet distributed for the Board's review prior to the meeting. On a motion by Mr. Holland and seconded by Mr. Shelton the Board unanimously agreed to approve each of the financial reports as presented for each of the above schools.

Dr. Casey presented the Board with updates on School Operations, including data on February's Full Time Equivalent (FTE) survey period. It was noted that both Chambers and PBPCA middle school fell short of budget expectations. Efforts to improve enrollment, including studies and rebranding, are already underway. School evaluation visits in January assessed the achievement framework, highlighting areas for improvement, particularly in teacher development. New teachers need support to meet required standards, and professional development for new team members in learning conversations and data meetings is needed. The visits included classroom observations, leadership support, and student achievement, with findings to inform the spring ELDA and other training programs.

A clarifying meeting with the Charter School Management Office is scheduled for February 24th to review safety and security requirements for charter renewal at SMC, ensuring alignment with Florida statutes. This proactive meeting aims to provide evidence of understanding through safety policies, not due to any red flags.

Additionally, General Counsel's office provided guidance on how principals should respond to potential ICE raids. Principals were informed on strategies about their responses if ICE officials appeared at a school. All NSA schools use the chartering districts enrollment forms which do not ask for documentation on immigration or migrant status. Concerns about attendance during FTE were addressed by principals speaking with parents to ensure student safety, which did not impact attendance or enrollment.

Lastly, Dr. Casey provided the Board with the School Operations Report for the following schools:

C.G. Bethel High School

a. Title IV 2024-2025 Allocation

On a motion by Mr. Holland and seconded by Mr. Shelton, the Board unanimously agreed to approve operational items as presented for C.G. Bethel High School.

Chambers High School

a. Title IV 2024-2025 Allocation

On a motion by Mr. Holland and seconded by Mr. Shelton, the Board unanimously agreed to approve operational items as presented for Chambers High School.

Palm Beach Preparatory Charter Academy

a. PBPCA Title 1 Reimbursement Letter

On a motion by Mr. Holland and seconded by Mr. Paul, the Board unanimously agreed to approve operational items as presented for Palm Beach Preparatory Charter High School.

Main Street Highschool

a. Annual Enrollment Capacity

On a motion by Mr. Shelton and seconded by Mr. Holland, the Board unanimously agreed to approve operational items as presented for Main Street High School.

Ms. DeAngelo provided the Board with the personnel report. On a motion by Mr. Holland and seconded by Mr. Shelton, the Board unanimously agreed to accept the Human Resources Report as presented regarding the employment vacancies throughout the NorthStar Academies.

With no further discussions, the meeting was adjourned at 5:56p.m. on a motion by Mr. Holland and seconded by Mr. Shelton.

By: Robert Holland  
Robert Holland (Mar 25, 2025 10:47 EDT)  
Title: Governing Board Chairwoman