



North Star Academy Parent Club
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NSA Parents Club

Special Budget Meeting Minutes

North Star Academy Parent Club Special Budget Meeting | School Library
03.26.26

Meeting Minutes: Parent Club Special Budget Meeting

Zoom: us02web.zoom.us/j/9109708882 | Meeting ID: 910 970 8882

Date: 3/26/26 | Location: School Library | Time: 8:48 am

* Please note that these minutes record oral discussion and may be read in conjunction with the slides presented at the meeting, which are available on the North Star Parents' website and here:

[MeetingSlides - Budget 2026-27](#)).

Members attending in Person:

Elle Koleckar
Ann Miller
Alysa Zyda

Bob Henig
Meghan Workman
Gina Harder

Kelley McCarthy
Keri King
Catherine Stuart

Zoom Attendees:

Michelle Guiney
Susan Bouchard
Brian Etscheid

Brian Parker
Emily Mangini
Lydia Snape

Courtney Rogerson

Welcome and Overview of Budget

(Elle Koleckar - President,
with Alysa Zyda, Treasurer)

Welcome and Overview

Elle Koleckar called the meeting to order at 8:59 a.m.¹ Special thanks to Meghan Workman for casting the slides to the library participants. Special thanks to Michelle Guiney for sharing the slides with the Zoom participants.

The proposed budget now under discussion was developed through additional discussion among area leads: Elle Koleckar and Bridgette Paravati (Parents Club President and Vice President), Bob Henig and Alysa Zyda (Treasurers), Marisa Reda (Auction and Community Development), Keri King (Events), and Gina Harder and Kelley McCarthy (Fundraising).

After today's discussion and proposals for change, **a final proposed budget will be posted to the Parents Club website and the newsletter no later than April 13, 2026.**

Overview of budget considerations:

- How do we balance fundraising with community engagement?
- We are carrying a surplus and want to spend the money parents have given to benefit their children in a timely way.
- Do we need the specific Fund-a-Need drive or should we use the surplus to pay for programs usually targeted with Fund-a-Need? What if these programs are "flagship programs," highly identified with North Star, such as enrichment?
- We have observed declining volunteers and community interest in some events.
- Our future fundraising goals should accurately reflect actual donations while not adding a burden to struggling families.
- We have discussed with Erin ramifications of changing Parents Club funding targets in light of what is eligible for funding though Prop 20, Measure U, etc.
- We have discussed with Erin anticipated budget cuts and their likely impact.
- We have also discussed with Principal Kekos the school's priorities and functional needs.

Budget Summary

¹ It was noted that the technical difficulties causing the late start were due to not having dedicated equipment/personnel for casting the visuals to both the meeting room and the Zoom attendees.

Alysa Zyda presented the budget “Big Picture.” Please refer to Slides 4 of the presentation. Paper printouts of the summarized budget were also available to library attendees. It is based on how money has actually been directed for this 2025-2026 school year. We can spend at this current level for 1.2 years.

Alysa highlighted anticipated **changes** from the existing (2025-26) budget.

Further requests/expenses that were not previously budgeted for include the following (Presentation Slide 5):²

- Bring our guest teacher (Anthony) from half to full time.
 - Anthony is essential to the day-to-day running of the school. He steps in whenever extra qualified hands are needed. He substitutes. He also can step in to care for individual scholars having trouble so an entire class is not sidetracked.
 - We were going to use Site Funds for him, but if the Parents Club can take on his salary, the school can instead use Site Funds for teacher development (Dr. Cash) and teacher planning.
- Yard duty hires for a two-hour period: 7:45-9:45
 - This personnel would be present at morning drop off for kids who get dropped early, plus provide additional recess yard duty.
 - \$30/hour → \$11,000. (This includes benefits.)
- Theater expenses
 - \$5000 for sets outsourcing.
 - \$2000 for Dinner the night before the show
 - Theater program is otherwise “self-funded” via participation fees and ticket sales.
- \$2k president’s discretionary fund: allows for unforeseen expenses (such as the theater dinner this year)

Increased costs of doing business: inflation, increasing fees, etc. (Presentation Slide 6):

- \$1,500 increase for Celebration of Cultures
 - Reflects rising costs of inflation, increasing performance fees
- \$3,000 increase for 3rd Grade Transition

² Note that our guest teacher, yard duty, and school improvements *could* be funded if the parcel tax passes.

- Covers costs of teacher participation in orientation. This also accurately reflects supplies costs (Erin currently uses Principal's Fund)
- \$2,400 increase One Life Counseling
 - Increased cost
- \$2,500 increase for Classroom Supplies
 - Currently allotted to 18 classrooms at \$500 each, \$10k total. Adds in \$500 each to RSP, Speech, Counseling (3 counselors share the \$500), TOSA, and Mr. Cagle.
- \$5,000 increase for Staff Appreciation
 - Increasing inflation, lack of volunteers
- \$10,000 increase for School Improvements
 - Currently at \$1k. Erin anticipates NSA taking an additional room in the MIT building next year. Updating the flooring will allow it to be used for multiple purposes - like dance and music.
- \$2,000 increase Principal Discretionary Fund
 - Currently at \$8k but used to be at \$10k. We decreased it to \$8k at Erin's request, but she's realized she needs it back at \$10k
- Fully Funding Enrichment at \$95,000
 - Fund-A-Need from 24-25 Auction increased total in 25-26 to \$95k. 24-25 budget was \$75k. NSA's flagship program should be funded at this increased level without dependency on Fund-A-Need.

Reductions and removals from the 2025-26 budget include the following (Presentation Slide 7):

- Festival of Words
 - This event doesn't seem to be noticed much when it happens, nor missed when it does not. It does not appear to provide a good return on investment.
- Auction
 - The high-end nature of the auction may make it less accessible as a community-building event. "Toning it down" has been discussed, though we also need to consider ramifications for fundraising.
- Fund-a-Need
 - Should the benefits typically targeted by the "Fund-a-need" campaign (i.e. Enrichment) be part of the regular mission/budget of the Parents Club rather than at the mercy of specific fundraising?

Discussion and Open Floor

President Koleckar opened the floor to discussion. The discussion was relatively free-form. Following is a collection of *questions* and answers, comments, and **proposed changes** to the posted budget, somewhat collected around areas of interest.

Principal's Fund

Is \$2000 the total fund available to the Principal?

We are proposing a \$2000 *increase*.

Third grade orientation: has the added expenditure provided a financial ROI? Third grade parents have expressed positive feedback regarding feeling welcomed, in contrast to the prior year's third grade families. We have not tracked donations by grade.

President's Fund

What is the purpose of the President's fund?

It would be an instant-access fund that the President would be able to spend without going to the board.

Currently, and in addition, the board can agree to make an expenditure up to \$2,500 outside of the budget. It is not a burdensome process.

Proposal to expand president's fund from \$2,000 to \$10,000. *Are we going to vote on an increase of the president's discretionary fund to \$10k? Yes.*

One commenter was uncomfortable with having one person able to be so unregulated with donated funds. President Koleckar also expressed discomfort with that much unregulated authority.

Maybe we should put a per transaction limitation.

PE Supplies removal

Why is a PE supplies fund unnecessary?

Coach Cagle gets \$500 to spend as needed. PE+ has a lot of its own equipment.

Rethinking the Auction

If we restructure the auction to make it more “inclusive,” how else do we get donations out of people?

Not all NSA events are intended to be fundraisers. Rather, the goals are community building, e.g. the Night at North Star, family dance, fall festival, Science Night, etc. In lieu of ‘watering down the auction,’ can these be made more enticing/affordable?

Removal of some expenses from the budget

Proposal that we remove the self-funded items (such as theater) from the Parents Club budget.

Treasurer Bob Henig: it has to be in the budget.

Spending on Teachers/Staff

We need to discuss and confirm what the Parents Club’s and school’s goals and missions are.

- Erin should fund that things the school should fund (teachers, stuff on campus)
- Parents should fund the things that go on top of education.

Erin: ideally we don’t want parents paying for positions. However, discretionary funds do not provide for all the positions we need.

Our staff is often excused from the district requirements/allocations because we have different allowances as an elementary, not middle, school.

Personnel in particular are big expenses not allocated to us.

We need clarity on who is paying for what.

The Principal paying for Anthony results in funding him from an assortment of sources. It is cleaner if we can allocate expenses for specific items from a clear, single source.

There may be another budget conversation in August.

Various measures have requirements of how they may be spent.

Why isn’t Erin requesting specific funding for, e.g., a vice principal?

We have various individuals who collectively can cover for the principal when she is not available. We have multiple people with an administrative credential. We have someone handling 504s and IEPs,

allowing Erin to visit classrooms, walk the yard etc. Dollar for dollar it's more efficient than hiring a single person.

Yard Duty hire

From an administrative perspective, could the two-hour yard duty hire also do administrative support after drop-offs, when they're not yet doing recess duty?

At 8:35 the person would be busy helping with late passes (taking that burden off of Peggy).

Revamping of multi-purpose room

The current music room was Coach Cagle's PE room. We want to re-floor it. We can use it for theater, a rainy day space, etc.

Enrichment

How is the Enrichment money being spent?

Trimester 1

- Full Day enrichment. Entrance fees, transport
- Science for Scientists
- Chess teachers in classroom plus an enrichment
- Baking, mostly materials

Trimester 2

- Coding. (The vendor was no good so we cut their contract short.)
- Materials (water color paper).
- Sewing machine repairs
- Storage boxes
- SD cards for cameras
- Fabric
- Hasmat suits

By the end of T3 we anticipate spending \$95,000, \$38,000 over the \$57,000 raised through Fund-a-Need - going forward we'd like to use the surplus funds to pay for the entire expected Enrichment expense for 2026-2027.

Standalone middle schools are funded art teachers, music teachers, etc. We are not.

Can we bring back gardening?

Enrichment must be instructional. Our gardening program failed to incorporate an educational benefit. A lot of unsupervised time and watering one another.

Can we make gardening more educational?

Let's move discussion of *which* enrichments to another venue or meeting.

Proposal to increase funding for Enrichment. Support from several attendees for increasing the Enrichment budget.

Other comments and questions

Disaster relief, student council allocations: are they being spent? Yes.

What is the value of the reserve? Should we spend down to it? We have budgeted to use some of the reserve to fulfill Erin's requests.

Our "Expected Income" is shown as going up. How?

It is a reflection of what is actually coming in. We don't want to over-ask, so we are not predicting. The "proposed income" line (purple column on Budget Big Picture slide) is a reflection of this year's results. Income numbers are likely to drop with the proposed changes.

The purple column reflects **this year's income**, which then pays for next year's expenses.

We need to shift the Jogathon item location to reflect whether it is community building versus an income generator.

We need to have some nominal entrance fee for events to restrict attendees. Discussion of whether that is useful. Other events, such Science Night and Celebration of Cultures, are successful without barriers to entry.

Will we change the requested donation per family or child? No. Still \$750 per child or \$1100 for the Navigator's Circle. We are only changing the **goals** to reflect what actually came in this year.

Next Steps

Members of the Parents Club are invited to vote on the budget at the April 23 Parents Club meeting. We will provide a brief overview of the budget as revised.

Motion to Adjourn made by Keri King. **Seconded** by Meghan Workman. Show of hands in favor; 0 votes to oppose, 0 votes to abstain. The motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:48 a.m.

[END Meeting Minutes | Ann Miller | Parent Club Secretary 2025-26]