



BRIGHTSTAR
S C H O O L S

Bright Star Schools Board of Directors Minutes of the Regular Meeting

A meeting of the Board of Directors of Bright Star Schools was held on **Tuesday, October 8, 2024** at Stella Elementary Charter Academy and via teleconference, pursuant to notice duly given.

On the meeting agenda, the legislative body noticed each teleconference location of each member participating in the public meeting, each teleconference location was accessible to the public, members of the public were allowed to address the legislative body at each teleconference location, and the legislative body posted an agenda at each teleconference location. At least a quorum of the legislative body participated from locations within the boundaries of the local agency's jurisdiction.

In attendance at the start of the meeting were board members Lois Levy, Dr. Marissiko Wheaton-Greer, Dr. Roberta Benjamin, Stephen Green, Alyce Johnson, Jason Rudolph, Louisa Wee and David Chang.

Bright Star Schools staff in attendance were Ana Martinez, Jeremy Brust, Liliana Bustos, Angelina Calderon, Dr. Tom Crowther, Lydia Garcia, China Habte, Sunil Kewalramani, Dr. Eliza KimLy, Alexandra Lee, May Oey, Marni Parsons, Marina Sandoval, Elijah Sugay, Johnny Teran, Steven Rockey. Guests and members of the public included Terry Tao, Lee Rosenberg, Keaton Sunserae, and Hwayoung Jeon.

1. **Call to Order and Introduction of Guests** - Lois Levy called the meeting to order at 5:07 p.m. after confirming that a quorum was present.
2. **Public Comment Period for Non-Agenda Items** - Lois Levy welcomed all members of the public including the representatives from LAUSD that were on the call.
3. **Meeting Kick-off by Ginnia Hargins, School Principal at Stella Middle Charter Academy (SMCA):** Ginnia Hargins highlighted upcoming events at her school, including literacy activities, Art Night, LatinX Heritage Spirit Week, Coffee with the Principal, and Family Nights. She concluded by outlining ways the board could support her school. Paula Villanueva-Palacios shared how the programs and activities at SMCA have positively prepared her for high school.
4. **Chief Executive Officer Updates by Ana Martinez:** Ana Martinez gave updates on student experience initiatives on the four Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAG): Excellence in Teaching and Learning, School Culture and Safety, Central Team Purpose, and Operational Excellence and Fiscal Sustainability. She reviewed the recent WASC committee visit at Valor Academy High School, highlighting areas for celebration and focus identified by the committee.
5. **Addition of David Chang as member of the BSS Finance Committee (FC) and BSS Board by Ana Martinez, Chief Executive Officer:** Ana noted that today's consent agenda includes a vote to add David Chang as a new board member to the Board. He has been introduced to the Finance and Governance committees, both of which support his candidacy.
6. **Chief Business Officer Presentation by Elijah Sugay:** Elijah provided an overview of the following:
 - **2024-25 School Budgets Update:** Elijah provided an overview of the school budgets for SY 2024-25. He highlighted that all schools meet the internal policy of 1% Net Income Reserve Requirement. He also highlighted that the central office's net income currently is at a deficit of -\$61,029. However, the previous operating loss at the central office was at



-\$176,000, and he reassured that their budget is trending in the right direction. Overall financial health of all Bright Star Schools remains strong, with reserves of approximately \$6.2M at the central office providing a solid financial cushion for our organization. All schools have between 60 to 200 Days Cash on Hand. He noted that there were no major changes from the CDE, with the COLA remaining steady at 1%. Enrollment numbers were adjusted to reflect actual figures, along with staffing needs and expenses identified through September. Elijah also mentioned that additional costs for Special Education Fee for Service (FFS) will be determined by LAUSD.

- Enrollment Update: Elijah provided an enrollment update by school. The data indicated deficits in 5 out of 9 schools. SECA and VAES are actively enrolling students, while RKES has exhausted its waitlist. SMCA is currently enrolling for 5th grade, and RKHS classrooms are at capacity. In terms of ADA updates, Elijah shared that for month 1, ADA is at 95.31%. He emphasized that senior VPs are collaborating with school teams to enhance attendance year over year.
- Facilities Update: Elijah presented facilities updates on BSS schools. He shared that construction financing for Valor Academy Elementary School closed in August 2024. Weekly meetings between the BSS team and project manager and architect about this project are ongoing. The estimated delivery date is August 2025. The new RKMS facility is shovel ready but the project has been stalled for a few years due to zoning exemptions from LAUSD.
- Revised RKES and RKMS Leases at La Fayette Update: Elijah shared that the leases for RKES and RKMS have been updated to align with the enrollment and ADA distribution for the schools.

7. Approval of Consent Agenda - Lois Levy indicated that the items for approval on the consent agenda were being moved to the earlier part of the meeting in order to allow for board members who need to leave early to vote on the items. She asked if any board members wanted to remove or vote on any items separately from the consent agenda. With no objections, she then called for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Jason Rudolph moved and Jen Cole seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda as follows:

- **Governance**
 - Minutes from BSS Board Meeting on August 27, 2024
 - Minutes from Academic Committee Meeting on September 30, 2024
 - Minutes from Governance Committee Meeting on October 2, 2024
 - Minutes from Finance Committee Meeting on October 3, 2024
 - Addition of David Chang to the BSS Board
- **Finance and Facilities**
 - Final 2024-25 School Budgets
 - Rise Kohyang Elementary School and Rise Kohyang Middle School Leases



Board Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Andrew Murr				x
Dr. Marissiko Wheaton-Greer	x			
Jennifer Cole	x			
Lois Levy	x			
Louisa Wee	x			
Marisol León				x
Stephen Green	x			
Jason Rudolph	x			
Dr. Roberta Benjamin	x			
Alyce Johnson	x			
Total	8	0	0	2
Motion Carries?	Yes			

- 8. Brown Act Compliance Training by Lee Rosenberg by Young, Minney & Corr LLP**
 Lee Rosenberg provided a comprehensive training on Brown Act compliance, focusing on essential topics such as board roles and responsibilities. The session emphasized that the board of directors serves as the governing body with legal responsibility for the charter school and outlined typical responsibilities, including approving the annual budget, LCAP, major contract, and hiring and evaluating the CEO. Participants learned about the Brown Act’s open meeting law, including what constitutes a meeting, the application to board-created committees-even advisory ones-and the various types of meetings. The training also covered the limits on closed session, public rights during meetings, managing disruptive attendees, and the requirements for posting agendas and time limits.

- 9. Chief Instructional Officer Presentation by Liliana Bustos:** Liliana Bustos provided a high-level overview of the Diagnostic 1 assessment iReady data in reading and math for all schools and grade levels. Results indicated a greater need for support in math, with Bright Star Schools about 10% below the state benchmark in both subjects. To address ELA needs, a new Director of Literacy has been appointed to collaborate with the Director of Elementary on programming and support analysis. For math, the Director of Mathematics will work with principals and assistant principals to enhance high-tier instruction. She also noted year-over-year improvements, with increased reading growth in second and fifth grades, and improved math performance in third, fifth and sixth grades. Additionally, she presented the 2024-25 grade-level stretch goals for reading and math. The data showed that 75% of students completed their reading lessons, while 85% completed their math lessons. Liliana also discussed initiatives to



strengthen instructional leadership, including monthly learning walks and community practice meetings with school administrators.

- 10. Senior Vice President of Student & Family Services by Marni Parsons:** Marni presented a year-over-year comparison of chronic absenteeism rates for all Bright Star schools from 2020 to 2023, showing an overall positive trend. She highlighted the absenteeism rates from September 25, 2023, to September 25, 2024, noting a general decrease across all schools. Marni also reviewed various attendance metrics and intervention strategies implemented to support chronically absent students. She provided updates on Average Daily Attendance (ADA), reporting that the organization aims for 96% attendance, with 6 out of 9 schools already meeting this goal. Lastly, she noted attendance trends, indicating higher rates from Tuesday to Thursday, with the highest absenteeism occurring on Mondays and Fridays.
- 11. Director of School Counseling and Alumni Support Presentation by Steven Rockey:** Steve started his presentation by highlighting several recent achievements at Bright Star Schools, including an overall matriculation rate of 85%. He celebrated Elias Cruz, a triple degree graduate from Stella High Charter Academy who earned a high school diploma, dual AA degrees, and a scholarship to UCLA. Additionally, he noted that Valor Academy High School had its highest matriculation rate ever at 91%. His presentation also included updates on org wide post-secondary pathways of all three high schools, revealing that 56% of graduates attended a four-year college, 22.2% enrolled in a community college, 9.2% pursued career and technical education (CTE), 5.2% took a gap year, 4.8% joined the workforce, and 2.0% enlisted in the military. He also provided data on overall UC and CSU matriculation rates, detailing which University of California and California State University campuses Bright Star graduates attended after high school. Steve also presented data on average student loan debt by high school across Bright Star for graduates attending four-year colleges/universities in 2024. He also shared college graduation rate statistics for the Class of 2018, emphasizing the impact of Alumni Support and College Success Programming, which assists Bright Star High School graduates six years post-graduation.
- 12. Vice President of Public Affairs Presentation by Angelina Calderón:** Angelina provided updates on the SECA Charter Renewal highlighting that a Public Hearing with LAUSD is scheduled for October 22nd, 2024 followed by a vote by LAUSD on December 3rd, 2024. She shared that two representatives from two LAUSD board member's offices visited Stella Elementary and got to see the campus and connect with the school leadership and management team. Angelina also reminded everyone that the BSS Board retreat is scheduled for Saturday, November 9th, at Rise Kohyang High School, and that there is a possibility of hiring a photographer to take headshot of board members and Senior Leadership Cabinet members on that day.
- 13. Committee Reports:** Committee representatives gave updates from their respective committee meetings and allowed members from other committees to further comment and/or ask questions.
- 14. Closed session: CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL-ANTICIPATED LITIGATION (Gov. Code section 54956.9(D)(2).) (1 matter):** At 6:41 pm, all BSS board members, Ana Martinez, Elijah Sugay, Angelina Calderon, Terry Tao and Jeremy Brust entered a closed session. They returned at 6:59 pm with no actions to report.
- 15. Adjournment:** Lois Levy called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Roberta Benjamin made



the motion and Louisa Wee seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

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Lois Levy, Board Member

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Lydia Garcia, Board Secretary