



**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, December 09, 2025** at Stella Elementary Charter Academy - Mansfield 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 Andrew Murr, Dr. Roberta Benjamin-Edwards, Jen Cole, Stephen Green, Alyce Johnson, Lois Levy, Dr. Marissiko-Wheaton Greer and Marisol León.

Bright Star Schools staff in attendance were Liliana Bustos, Karen Medina, Ruth Kim, Dr. Darryl Garris, Gene Castro, Alexandra Lee, Ana Martinez, Elijah Sugay, Angelina Calderon, Andres Paniagua, Breana Baskerville, Jaqueline Orellana and Luis Estrada. Members of the public included Genesee Islas, James Perrault, Sunserae Keaton and Andrew.

- 1. Call to Order and Introduction of Guests:** Andrew Murr called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. after confirming that a quorum was present.
- 2. Public Comment Period for Non-Agenda Items:** The chair explained public comment rules and asked for public comment on non-agenda items. None made. Ana acknowledged that Board members received a copy of a written public comment that was previously shared through email.
- 3. Meeting Kick-off by Karen Medina, Community School Manager at Rise Kohyang Middle School:** The focus of the school has been on Students feeling Safe, Known and Engaged along with a focus on Literacy. Partnership to support students' access to books and community resources. She highlighted the partnership with Woodcraft Rangers. Board members also heard from Genesee Islas, 8th grade student at RKMS who wants to be a Radiologist in the future.
- 4. Academic Committee Report by Dr. Roberta Benjamin-Edwards:** Dr. Benjamin-Edwards shared that the CEO, Ana Martinez presented an update on the strategic plan and celebrated RKES, SMCA and VAHS renewals as well as CAASPP results. The committee also heard from Liliana who presented DFS updates and they asked her to include a comparison with LAUSD in the data. Finally, they heard updates from Marni on the LCSSP grant and Sebastian on the School Wellness Policy.



- 5. Chief Executive Officer/Lead Executive Officer Presentation by Ana Martinez:** Ana provided the following updates:  
**Strategic Goals:** Ana presented highlights from the second year of the Strategic Plan. She explained that the organization is working toward greater coherence and clarity by aligning all leaders and systems to shared student goals, reducing siloed work across departments as well as centering students and families. She noted that staff support has improved through the Phase II compensation redesign and through strategic staffing changes within the School Support Team (SST). Ana emphasized that the organization is now advancing equity by building consistent instructional and operational systems that strengthen school support, improve communication, and help monitor outcomes—addressing past challenges in how schools and the SST worked together. She also walked through the organization’s main goals across four pillars: strengthening teaching and learning, improving school culture and safety, building an effective SST structure, and ensuring operational excellence and long-term financial sustainability. Ana shared that the upcoming Impact Report and End-of-Year Appeal letter will give Board members an opportunity to support the Board Covenant Commitment by sharing the materials with their networks.
  
- 6. Chief Instructional Officer Presentation by Liliana Bustos:** Liliana presented updates on the following:  
Proficiency and Distance From Standard (DFS) Results: Liliana Bustos, Chief Instructional Officer, reviewed historical CAASPP proficiency trends in ELA and Math for our elementary schools from 2018 to 2025. She noted that state ELA proficiency has remained relatively stable at around 45%. BSS High schools are outperforming the state and LAUSD. In Math proficiency, BSS elementary schools have outperformed LAUSD and State scores. We continue to have areas of focus in each subject area. She also presented the DFS results, explaining that this measure helps show how ALL students are performing collectively in relation to state standards. She provided an overview of our elementary, middle, and high school performance from 2022 to 2025. In SBAC ELA DFS, elementary and middle schools performed below the state, while high schools performed above the state. In SBAC Math DFS, elementary schools performed above the state, while middle and high schools performed below it. Liliana also showed results broken down by grade band highlighting that our students are growing by grade level band. Board member Dr. Benjamin highlighted the ELA performance in high Schools and the Math performance in elementary should be analyzed and noted that it will be important to ensure resources are spent on the areas of growth.
  
- 7. Vice President of Public Affairs Presentation by Angelina Calderon:** Angelina gave an update on the Learning Communities for School Success Program (LCSSP) grant, which provided \$529,050 over three years to support positive, non-punitive programs aimed at reducing truancy and keeping vulnerable students in school. Key activities included training and support from the Director of Restorative Practices on alternatives to suspension, and the SST conducting 275 Attendance Intervention Planning meetings with families. The grant also funded 17 Licensed Marriage and Family Therapy Interns



through PUC Counselors, who provided mental health services to 340 students and families across grades TK–12. These efforts led to a major decrease in suspension rates, dropping from 1.7% in 2023–24 to 0.79% in 2024–25, which are attributed to strong alignment and training around restorative practices and behavior response systems. However, chronic absenteeism improved only slightly, decreasing from 21% to 20.75%, with only four schools showing reductions. Lois noted that some of the folks that we hired through grant money will be kept on and are now included as part of the school budgets. Angelina also reviewed Average Daily Attendance (ADA) updates. She indicated that November data is not yet available, but October ADA was slightly below October of the previous year.

8. **Director of School Operations and Facilities Presentation by Luis Estrada:** Luis presented the School Wellness Policy, which outlines Bright Star Schools' commitment to creating a supportive, health-focused environment for all students in grades K–12. The policy has three main goals: (1) promoting children's health by providing school environments that encourage healthy eating in compliance with state and federal nutrition guidelines; (2) supporting learning by treating healthy eating and physical activity as essential components of child development, connected to the school meal program and nutrition education; and (3) involving students, families, teachers, and other stakeholders in developing, implementing, and reviewing nutrition and physical activity practices. A central part of this policy is ensuring that all K–12 students receive two free meals each day at no cost to the school through the Community Eligibility Program (CEP). This is made possible through our partnership with our School Food Authority, Schools in Action.
9. **Governance Committee Report by Andrew Murr, Board and Committee Chair:** Andrew reported that the meeting happened on December 3rd where they recommended approval of the Charter School Compliance Monitoring Forms for the Consent agenda. They received an update on Teacher Retention data and the Fall Staff Pulse Survey results. Since Principals will be meeting this week to discuss the results, they won't be presented to the full board but the materials are available in their Board files.
10. **Manager of Compliance and Special Projects Presentation by Lydia Garcia:** Since Lydia was sick, Angelina presented the Charter School Compliance Certification Forms for all Bright Star Schools. She shared that this form is required for all schools as part of the LAUSD Annual Performance Based Oversight Visits, which will begin in January 2026. The Second Submission (Certification of Board Compliance Review), which requires the Board Chair's wet signature and the approved form along with the relevant agenda and minutes, is due to LAUSD via Dropbox by January 9, 2026. After the Board meeting on December 9, Lydia will arrange a meeting with the BSS Board Chair to collect wet signatures on all nine documents.
11. **Finance Committee Report by Stephen Green, Board and Committee member:** Stephen reported that the Committee met on Thursday, December 4th. He noted that



lower enrollment and ADA may impact programming and operating costs. However, in the event that the schools have a dip in ADA and enrollment, variable costs would be adjusted without impacting services. Dr. Benjamin-Edwards offered that enrollment concerns reflect local and state trends.

**12. Chief Financial Officer Presentation by Elijah Sugay:** Elijah Sugay updated on the following:

- Average Daily Attendance: Elijah shared the Average Daily Attendance (ADA) Performance for October 2025 compared to October 2024 and reported that BSS exceeded its budgeted ADA of 92.5%, achieving a performance of 94.89% in October 2025, which is 0.48% higher than the 94.41% achieved in October 2024. This improvement in ADA is significant because every 1% increase in ADA adds approximately \$550,000 org-wide to the bottom line.
- 2025-2026 School Enrollment Overview: Elijah shared enrollment numbers, showing a small increase: 3,766 students were enrolled on November 1, 2025, compared to 3,694 on November 1, 2024. This is an enrollment increase of 1.95% from this time in comparison to the 24-25 school year. As requested by the committee, he also shared historical enrollment data so he could identify trends. In addition, he presented data on student entries and withdrawals. In October 2024, 18 students enrolled and 36 left. In October 2025, 23 students enrolled and 24 left. This decrease in volatility is helpful for the budgets.
- Financial Dashboard: 1st Interim Financials (Financials Through 10/31/25): Elijah shared that the financials through October 31st, 2025 show a balanced forecast, with revenue projected to be stable and expenses favorable compared to the budget. All schools are required to submit first interim financials from July 1st through October 31st to the CDE and our authorizer, LAUSD. The revenues stand at \$88.9M and the Expenses at \$89.3M. The organization is forecasting a much smaller negative net income of -\$117K for October 2025 compared to a budgeted net income of -\$332K. This improvement is due to slightly lower forecasted expenses versus budgeted expenses, while revenues remain mostly stable. Elijah shared that the drivers in expenses include vacancy savings across several schools, schools being more intentional about how they outsource certain student services, and overall stable spending patterns across major categories.
- Revenue and Expense Adjustments: Elijah also presented an overview of the upcoming revenue and expense adjustments associated with BSS's restricted funds strategy. He explained that mid-year budget updates will incorporate additional restricted grant funding tied to strategic program expansion, specifically from Prop 28 (Arts/Music Education) and the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP). Elijah noted that these revenues are designated to support expanded arts, music, and creative programming, as well as enhanced before-school, after-school, and intersession programs. He also highlighted corresponding expense adjustments, including strategic staffing additions- such as arts instructors and enrichment staff - and program investments aligned with allowable uses of these restricted funds. Elijah shared updated forecasts with financials as of October for each school.



- **School Leadership Impact:** Bright Star Schools saw a meaningful Reduction in Spending saw an average decrease of 39% in substitute spending compared to budget. There is also lower special education outsourcing costs. He said he will continue to monitor the data and may adjust the forecasts once November and December data is taken into consideration.
- **Audit Update:** Elijah reported that our audit is delayed. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) 2025 Compliance Supplement was delayed because of the recent federal government shutdown (October 1-November 12, 2025), which paused many federal agency operations. The final 2025 Compliance Supplement was released by OMB just before Thanksgiving. All our schools have submitted extension requests to our authorizer, extending the audit deadline to January 31, 2026. Once audit work is complete, we will bring the audited results to the BSS Board with a formal presentation by our external auditors. Once the Final Audit report is ready, as soon as auditors complete testing under the new Compliance Supplement, it will be presented to the Board.
- **Facilities Updates:** Elijah reported that three applications for Prop 2 funding were submitted. Unfortunately, the ones for RKES/RKMS were denied due to the nature of the property. SECA and SHCA are being considered for approval based on the point system. He also shared that Valor Academy Elementary School (VAES) has experienced further delays primarily due to inclement weather, inspector availability, and the Holidays. Inspections of the new site are ongoing. The target date for the Certificate of Occupancy is December 19, 2025 and move-in date is January 6, 2026.

**13. Approval of Consent Agenda:** Andrew Murr asked if anyone from the board wanted any items removed from the consent agenda. Since there were no requests, Andrew Murr called for a motion to approve all items on the consent agenda as follows:

**Governance**

- Minutes of the BSS Board meeting on October 21, 2025
- Minutes of the BSS Board Retreat on November 8, 2025
- Minutes of the Academic Committee meeting on December 01, 2025
- Minutes of the Governance Committee meeting on December 03, 2025
- Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on December 04, 2025

**Academic**

- Local School Wellness Policy

**Finance and Facilities**

- 1st Quarter Interim Reports
- Financials Through 10/31/2025 (Financial Dashboard, Consolidated P&L, Consolidated Balance Sheet)
- 2025-2026 Charter School Compliance Monitoring Forms for all Bright Star Schools: Stella Elementary Charter Academy, Stella Middle Charter Academy, Stella High Charter Academy, Rise Kohyang Elementary School, Rise Kohyang Middle School, Rise Kohyang High School, Valor Academy Elementary School, Valor Academy Middle School, Valor Academy High School



Jen Cole moved to approve, and Lois Levy seconded the motion. Votes were then recorded as follows:

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 (not present during the vote)
Stephen Green	x			
Jason Rudolph				x
Dr. Roberta Benjamin	x			
Alyce Johnson	x			
David Chang				x
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Motion Carries?</b>	<b>Yes</b>			

**14. Closed Session:** CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL-EXISTING LITIGATION (Gov. Code Section 54956.9(d)(1).) Case Name Unspecified. The Board did not enter into a closed session during the meeting.

**15. Adjournment:** There being no further business, Andrew Murr called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Roberta Benjamin-Edwards moved, and Alyce Johnson seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

Signed by:  
  
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 Andrew Murr, Board Chair

Signed by:  
  
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 Angelina Calderon, Vice President of Public Affairs