



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, February 24, 2026** 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, David Chang, Stephen Green, Alyce Johnson, Lois Levy, and Marisol León.

Bright Star Schools staff in attendance were Liliana Bustos, Angelina Calderon, Elizabeth Carter, Gene Castro, Luis Estrada, Lydia Garcia, Dr. Darryl Garris, Jaime Hernandez, Alexandra Lee, Ana Martinez, Marni Parsons, Yadira Sanchez, Elijah Sugay, Sebastian Valdes. Attorney Patricia Lynch, and Attorney Wendy Tucker also joined as guests.

- 1. Call to Order and Introduction of Guests:** Andrew Murr called the meeting to order at 5:02 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. No comments were made at this time.
- 3. Meeting Kick-off by Yadira Sanchez, Community School Manager at Valor Academy Elementary School:** Yadira described how the school is strengthening its community school model by centering student voice and using data to drive decisions. Student feedback surfaced key needs - vision, food support, stronger teacher relationships, and clearer family communication- which guided Year 1 priorities and coordinated supports. Early wins included 378 vision screenings with 133 students receiving glasses, 54 families stabilized through referrals and \$3,650 in external aid, more than 1,500 books mobilized to launch a new library, 15 parents trained as public Health Ambassadors, and 25 adults enrolled in ESL through LA Mission College. She emphasized that this work is a long-term, integrated strategy for sustainable academic growth built through authentic family engagement, community partnerships, and shared leadership.
- 4. Academic Committee Report by Dr. Roberta Benjamin-Edwards:** Dr. Benjamin-Edwards reported that the Academic Committee received several updates. These included the proposed SY 2026-27 academic calendar and strategic staffing updates for the School Support Team. The Committee also reviewed i-Ready Diagnostic 2 results, which showed overall growth in both ELA and Math. In addition, members received an update on the yearlong curriculum adoption process and recommended Board approval of Benchmark for grades K-5 and Into Literature for grades 6-12. She also reported that the Committee received updates on summer school planning and DU YA across all Bright Star Schools, and



updates on ongoing monitoring of ADA, chronic absenteeism, and suspension data. The LACP midyear update was also reviewed during the meeting.

5. **Chief Executive Officer/Lead Executive Officer Presentation by Ana Martinez:** Ana shared that today, Senior Leaders and their teams will share how they are using data to adjust strategies and make informed decisions, whether related to after school programming or facilities, to ensure BSS is acting in the best interest of students. This work continues to be grounded in our four goals, introduced two years ago. We are now in Year 2 and will carry these priorities forward next year. Ana also highlighted the ribbon cutting and lunar new year celebration that took place at Rise Kohyang High School. She thanked all board members who attended, as well as those who sent their support.

6. **Chief Instructional Officer Presentation by Liliana Bustos:** Liliana presented updates on the following:
 - i-Ready D2: Liliana Reported that the iReady D2 data shows overall growth from fall to winter in both ELA and Math. From winter to winter, the percentage of students performing at or above grade level in ELA increased from 24% to 27%, with especially positive results in grade levels participating in the ELA curriculum pilot. In Math, the percentage of students scoring three or more grade levels below decreased from 37% to 34%, and SGI pilot programs are showing progress for students in Tier 3.
 - Curriculum Audit & Adoption: Liliana shared a high-level overview of the curriculum audit process that Laura Gaboudian and Jessica Rodriguez have worked on over the past year. She began by reviewing the current ELA programming and outlining the audit and adoption timeline, explaining the steps taken and the rationale behind each phase as her team evaluated various curriculum options. She highlighted the mission of the ELA Curriculum Adoption Committee and shared how both teachers and committee members identified a need for high-quality instructional materials within one comprehensive K-12 ELA program. She concluded by requesting that the Board vote for Bright Star Schools to adopt the K-12 ELA Curriculum, proposing Benchmark for grades K-5 and Into Literature for grades 6-12.
 - Expanded Learning Opportunities: Elizabeth Carter shared that BSS is preparing for summer and after-school supports. Principals are currently selecting Summer School administrators through an application process, and teacher applications will open in March. All nine schools are scheduled to offer summer school from July 6-31. BSS will extend the partnership with Options for Youth for one year as we explore other partners. In addition, the organization will continue the partnership with DUYA, an after-school intervention provider now serving six schools, where participating students are showing strong progress with average gain of about 20 percentage points.

7. **Senior Vice President of Student and Family Services Presentation by Marni Parsons:** Marni shared ADA updates and indicated that it is trending positively, with ADA in January 2025 being at 92.45% compared to 91.52% in January 2026. Marni shared that in SY23-24, LAUSD issued a Notice to Cure for Rise Kohyang Elementary School due to a high disproportionate suspension rate for African American students (21.48%). For SY24-25, LAUSD issued a Notice of Concern, calculating the rate of African American/Black students at 15.85%, showing improvement but still above expectations; however, the state's calculation method (which counts students suspended rather than total suspensions) shows a lower rate of 4.35%. LAUSD expects its authorized charter schools to keep overall suspension rates below 5% yearly and reduce disproportionality among student groups. In



25-26, RKES currently has zero suspensions and is emphasizing “Other Means of Correction” (OMC), using alternatives to suspension and training staff to document these interventions. Similarly, Rise Kohyang Middle School (RKMS) and Stella High Charter Academy received Notices of Concern last year but both reduced suspension rates in SY24-25, lowered disproportionality, and currently maintain low suspension rates in 25-26 while increasing use of OMC strategies. Overall, across the network, schools are keeping suspension rates low, prioritizing alternatives to suspension, and working to meet district expectations, especially important as RKMS and SHCA will renew their charters in SY26-27.

8. **Vice President of Instructional Systems and Strategy Presentation by Alexandra Lee:** Alexandra presented the SY2026-2027 Academic Calendar and confirmed that the proposed calendar aligns closely with LAUSD’s published draft. She reminded the board that this item is part of tonight’s consent agenda and that a separate vote is not required.

9. **Governance Committee Report by Andrew Murr, Board and Committee Chair:** Andrew reported that the Committee received a detailed update in talking about the strategic changes to the School Support Team (SST) and the various communications shared org-wide. The Committee also received the Midyear LCAP update, as well as information on policy changes related to Promoting a Safe and Secure Learning Environment for All: Policies to Responding to Immigration Issues, which is included in the consent agenda.

10. **Vice President of Public Affairs Presentation by Angelina Calderon:** Angelina provided the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) Mid-Year update which included an overview about the purpose of the mid-year reports, including legal requirements, a high level overview of the data collection and general timeline for approval of the LCAP. She shared that our LCAP goals are the same as last year’s across all schools and focus on increasing student academic growth through state test scores, English proficiency, iReady assessments; fostering a positive and supportive school culture that supports both social-emotional development and family involvement; and maintaining well-kept school facilities, ensuring properly credentialed staff, and delivering standards-aligned instruction. Angelina also talked about the metrics and actions for each goal, and their level of implementation across all of our schools. She also provided an overview of the expenditures linked to each action. Angelina’s presentation on Promoting a Safe and Secure Learning Environment for All: Policies to Responding to Immigration Issues highlighted how state and federal laws protect students’ educational rights regardless of federal immigration enforcement actions. She highlighted that these policies are not new as Bright Star Schools (BSS) previously adopted policies in May 2017 to prohibit the voluntary sharing of information with federal immigration authorities. However, they are being presented today as the new AB 495, effective January 1, 2026, strengthens these protections by prohibiting school personnel from allowing immigration enforcement officers into nonpublic school areas or disclosing any student information without a valid judicial warrant. Due to this additional clarification in legal language, BSS is required to update its policies by March 1, 2026, to cover specific areas like student and family data handling, responding to enforcement requests for information or access to school sites, and addressing family detention/deportation and related hate crimes or bullying. The updated policies must also include adopting and posting the "Know Your Educational Rights" checklist for students and families.



11. Finance Committee Report by David Chang, Board and Committee member: David Chang reported that the Finance Committee focused on two areas at its last meeting. First, the Committee reviewed the monthly financial dashboard and financials through December, including the key drivers behind year-to-date results and the steps schools are taking to remain on track. Second, the Committee reviewed the E-rate cabling bids. Many schools currently have network cables that are over two decades old, which affects connectivity; however, E-rate funding will cover much of the upgrade cost. The Committee also received updates on the audit closeout and phased compensation strategies, including key milestones. Today's presenters will provide additional details.

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

- Financial Dashboard & Monthly Financials Ending 12/31/25: Elijah provided an overview of financial performance December 31 2025, comparing the approved budget to the year-end forecast. He reported that the organization has improved its financial position from a projected \$332K loss to a \$16k surplus. Our revenues are trending over \$1.4M above where we budgeted. This increase is due to the recognition of restricted grant revenue as well as revenue tied directly to allowable program expenditures. He also shared that there is also growth in overall expenses, over \$1.0M. The drivers for this were grant-funded program curriculum investments, depreciation expenses and personnel cost true-up reduced projected growth. At the school level, six of the nine schools are projected to meet or exceed their net income requirements. Two schools remain below target but are stable, and mitigation strategies are actively underway at Rise Kohyang Middle School. Overall, performance reflects steady progress, with focused attention on campuses that require additional financial stabilization.
- Audit Update: Elijah shared an update on the audit timeline and framework. The audit is currently in the final stages of fieldwork and active closeout but has experienced delays. Key drivers include staffing transition and knowledge transfer challenges following the loss of key accounting personnel. This required additional effort to locate supporting documentation reconstruction audit trails, and validate year-end entries such as accrual, reclass or reclasses, cut off and estimates. Additionally some interim audit procedures were completed later than usual, increasing follow-up requests and turnaround time. Federal compliance timing related to Single Audit requirements also contributed to delays due to broader timing constraints and federal guidance releases. The team is now in active closeout, coordinating daily with auditors, resolving open testing requests in real time and focusing on finalizing remaining procedures and draft financial statements. The audit is expected to be ready in approximately four weeks. Elijah noted that the delay in audit should not pose a problem for LAUSD oversight, provided there are no findings.
- Compensation/Staffing Update: Elijah shared that compensation updates have been implemented through a phased, strategic approach to ensure competitive, equitable, and sustainable pay across all school-based roles. In FY25-26 (Phase 1), adjustments focused on key instructional leadership positions, including Principals, Assistant Principals, Deans, Teachers and Counselors, to strengthen retention, enhance market competitiveness, and support student outcomes. In FY26-27 (Phase 2), the initiative expands to additional school-based roles, ensuring internal equity across campuses and promoting long-term staff stability. Phase 2 continues this progression by reinforcing sustainability through multi-year financial modeling, ongoing budget reviews, and staff



alignment to protect organizational margins and reserves while maintaining competitive compensation over a three to five-year horizon.

- **Facilities Updates:** Elijah shared that The Rise Kohyang High School ribbon-cutting ceremony was successfully held on February 7. The Augmentation Grant closeout process with LAUSD is currently underway, and mediation to ensue. Potential additional project costs have been incorporated into the budget as a precaution. The project is progressing through the closeout phase, with mediation and grant reconciliation underway. Elijah also shared that Valor Academy Elementary School (VAES) has officially moved into its new site in early January.

13. Senior Vice President of Operations Presentation by Sebastian Valdes: Sebastian Valdes provided updates on the following:

- **Erate Bids:** Sebastian presented the proposed e-rate cabling upgrade, explaining that much of the existing infrastructure at RKMS, RKES, and SHCA is a 10-15+ years old and can no longer support the high volume of devices, high density wi-fi, and growing technology demands across campuses. With nearly 1500 students and staff devices, hundreds of smart devices, and about 200 access points in use, the upgrade is necessary to ensure reliability and to prepare for planned internet upgrades in the coming years. The recommended vendor is Nationwide Network Solutions, a long-time partner familiar with the organization's IT needs. The total project cost is \$415, 700.94, with approximately 90% reimbursed through E-Rate, resulting in a net cost of \$41,570 to the organization.
- **2025-26 School Enrollment Overview:** Sebastian shared enrollment numbers, showing a small increase: 3,740 students were enrolled on January 31, 2026, compared to 3,676 on January 31, 2025.

14. Approval of Consent Agenda: Andrew Murr asked whether any board members wished to remove items from the consent agenda or discuss any items further and invited public comment. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve all items on the consent agenda as follows:

Governance

- Minutes of the BSS Board meeting on December 9, 2025
- Minutes of the Special BSS Board meeting on January 29, 2026
- Minutes of the Governance Committee meeting on February 11, 2026
- Minutes of the Academic Committee meeting on February 17, 2026
- Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on February 19, 2026
- Promoting a Safe and Secure Learning Environment for All: Policies to Responding to Immigration Issues

Academic

- SY 26-27 Academic Calendar
- Literacy Audit & Adoption

Finance and Facilities

- Financial Dashboard & Monthly Financials Ending 12/31/2025: Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Forecast, and Budget-to-Actuals
- E-Rate Bids



Lois Levy moved to approve the consent agenda, and Dr. Roberta Benjamin-Edwards 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			
Stephen Green	x			
Jason Rudolph				x
Dr. Roberta Benjamin	x			
Alyce Johnson	x			
David Chang	x			
Total	7	0	0	4
Motion Carries?	Yes			

15. Closed Session: Conference with Legal Counsel - Existing Litigation (Gov. Code section 54956.9(d)(1).) Case Name Unspecified: (disclosure would jeopardize settlement negotiations): All Board members, Ana Martinez, Patricia Lynch, Wendy Tucker, and Angelina Calderon entered a closed session at 6:05 p.m. At 6:15 p.m., all board members and BSS staff returned from the closed session. There were no actions to report.

16. Closed Session: Conference with Legal Counsel - Existing Litigation (Gov. Code section 54956.9(d)(1).) Case Name Unspecified: (disclosure would jeopardize settlement negotiations): All Board members, Ana Martinez, Patricia Lynch, and Angelina Calderon entered a closed session at 6:15 p.m. At 6:18 p.m., all board members and BSS staff returned from the closed session. There were no actions to report.



17. Closed Session: PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (Gov. Code section 54957(b)(1).) Title: Lead Executive Officer: All Board members entered a closed session at 6:18 p.m. and returned at 6:53 p.m. There were no actions to report from the closed session.

18. Adjournment: There being no further business, Andrew Murr called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Alyce Johnson moved, and David Chang seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Signed by:
Andrew Murr
774614467444C1

Andrew Murr, Board Chair

DocuSigned by:
Lydia Garcia
32B4B3530BB448E

Lydia Garcia, Manager of Compliance & Special Projects
& Board Secretary