



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 **Monday, April 6, 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, Jen Cole, Alyce Johnson, Marisol León, Lois Levy, Louisa Wee, and Dr. Marissiko Wheaton-Greer.

Bright Star Schools staff in attendance were Liliana Bustos, Angelina Calderon, Dr. Thomas Crowther, Gene Castro, Lydia Garcia, Dr. Eliza KimLy, Alexandra Lee, Ana Martinez, Marni Parsons, Marina Sandoval, Elijah Sugay, Sebastian Valdes. Auditors Ira Gonzalez and Andrew Park from Eide Bailly, LLP also joined as guests.

- 1. Call to Order and Introduction of Guests:** Andrew Murr called the meeting to order at 5:03 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 Stella Middle Charter Academy:** Marina shared an update on SMCA's work, focused on supporting the whole child through four key areas: integrated student supports, family and community engagement, collaborative leadership, and expanded learning opportunities. She highlighted several impacts on students, including a Wellness Center that provides a safe daily space, 63 students supported through partnerships for mentorship and mental health services, 130 students receiving glasses through Vision to Learn, and \$1,200 in housing assistance for families. Engagement efforts have also grown, with increased participation in events like the Winter Festival and strong community partnerships. Students benefit from expanded learning opportunities such as coding classes and garden programs. Looking ahead, the school plans to expand support to multilingual learners and students with EIPs, invest in teacher collaboration, strengthen trauma-informed practices, and continue growing hands-on community-based learning experiences.
- 4. Independent Auditor's Report by Andrew Park:** Andrew shared that the BSS audit is not yet ready because it is still being completed. The process has taken longer than usual due to departure of the former controller, who held most of the organization's institutional financial knowledge. Auditors expect the report to be ready in the next two to three weeks. So far, there are no compliance findings. However, BSS was flagged for a technical deficiency related to lease accounting (GAAP ASC 842), which does not impact the organization's overall financial position.



- 5. Academic Committee Report by Committee Member Lois Levy:** Dr. Benjamin-Edwards was not in attendance, so Lois Levy provided the Academic Committee report on her behalf. She reported that the Committee received updates on Valor Academy High School being named a 2026 California distinguished school. Liliana Bustos provided updates on McKenzie and next year's plans for teacher release days and Teacher Leadership Institute. Alix Duggins shared updates on successful strategies around Math instruction. The Committee also received updates on the ongoing support provided to school administrators at the elementary and middle schools by Dr. Thomas Crowther and by Dr. Eliza KimLy at the high schools.
- 6. Chief Executive Officer/Lead Executive Officer Presentation by Ana Martinez:** Ana Martinez shared that RKES and RKMS will remain individual K-5 and 6-8th schools and continue operating as separate LEAs. She also celebrated Valor Academy High School being named a 2026 California Distinguished School. Additionally, Ana provided an overview of the five measurable outcomes, noting that SLC staff are continuing their work and reporting progress toward each.
- 7. Chief Instructional Officer Presentation by Liliana Bustos:** Liliana presented updates on the following:
- McKenzie Scott Grant update: Liliana reported that the use of the McKenzie Scott funds has been focused on strengthening Tier 1 instruction. In 2024-25, the funds paid for the cost of subs for 1 release day led by content directors. In 2025-26, the funds were used to pay for the cost of subs for 2 release days and aligned Teacher Leader Roles and Stipends. That included the cost of hosting the Teacher Leadership Institute which will continue this summer. One practice that will be sunsetted is Teacher Release days since we want students to be on campus. Their PD will shift to Wednesday afternoon times that are already embedded. Additionally, for 2026-27, the funds will be used to pay for Lead Teacher Retreats in the Fall and Spring and an exciting new practice of content specific Demonstration Teachers who will model demo lessons. McKenzie Scott funds balance is \$2.11M.
- School Based Updates: Liliana invited Dr. Crowther and Dr. KimLy to give updates on the transformational work and programmatic support. Dr. Crowther gave an update on the Game Plans, Multi-Tiered Support Systems, which all schools have started in 6-8 week cycles. One area they are still working on is improving on problems of practice and date they review. Another programmatic focus has been the Master Schedule aligning on minutes per subject, and SLT owning the master schedule set up on Aeries. There are still opportunities to align on Small Group instruction in the elementary schools, and on Advisory class. He differentiated that MTSS meetings include Counselor and school leadership for Tier 1 instruction. For SSPT meetings, attendees include teachers and counselors and focus on Tier 2 & 3 support for students. Dr. Crowther also shared an update on the elementary and middle schools worlds. He highlighted a change from 1:1 coaching to Tiered Support Model, Communities of Practice for Principals and Assistant Principals, Give & Get meetings and Seasonal Retreats in the middle of the year and end of year.
- High School & Expanded Learning Updates: HS updates were provided by Dr. Eliza KimLy. She shared that the norming process has started with Course Catalog Accountability & Systems. This will help with grade norming and Professional Development. She reported that we've also had ins and outs with APs so there's been a lot of support provided on high accountability measures. In terms of Expanded Learning, Dr. KimLy reported that summer



school will be offered across all nine schools. Summer School Administrators hired and PD has begun. We are in the process of closing summer school teacher applications. The other conversations have been on Summer Bridge norming and collaboration. Lastly, DUYA pilots will begin at high schools soon, the first one will be VAHS.

- 8. Senior Vice President of Student and Family Services Presentation by Marni Parsons:** Marni's updates were as follows:
ADA and Chronic Absenteeism: Marni shared ADA updates and indicated that it is trending positively, with ADA in February 2025 being at 91.58% compared to 93.04 in February 2026. She also reviewed each school's current chronic absenteeism as of 3/17/26, and indicated that RKMS, RKHS, SMCA, SHCA, and VAES exceeded their ADA targets.
Family Engagement Survey Results: Marni presented family engagement survey results noting that over the past four years, the organization has consistently exceeded its targets for both survey participation and overall family satisfaction. Most notably, parent satisfaction reached a high of 97% this year, surpassing the 80% goal. While current results show that most families are highly satisfied and feel included in school decision-making—ranking in the 80th percentile nationally for school climate—the data also identified specific areas for growth. Key concerns include school safety and a desire for more impactful parent programs. In response, school leaders will spend the spring and summer updating their "Game Plans" and designing new community initiatives. This feedback will drive a major organization-wide family engagement focus launching in the 2026-27 school year, ensuring that parent voices continue to lead the way for school improvements.
- 9. Governance Committee Report by Andrew Murr, Board and Committee Chair:** Andrew reported that the Governance Committee received a detailed update on Values Ways Points results for BSS as well as updates on LAUSD annual performance-based oversight visits. A special thank you was given to Dr. Roberta Benjamin-Edwards for attending many of the in-person visits. He also shared that Angelina Calderon talked about the search for a new Director of Communications and Development, and that Lydia Garcia shared updates on Board attendance. Additionally, he noted that Jason Rudolph has chosen not to renew his board membership, and thanked him for his two years of valuable service. He also reported that the Committee met in closed session about Ana's review and the rest of the board will meet in closed session again today.
- 10. Vice President of Public Affairs Presentation by Angelina Calderon:** Angelina provided updates on the hiring of the Director of Communications and Development. Over 60 applications have been reviewed. The new role will have a primary focus on fundraising and institutional gifts. She also provided an update on donations to Bright Star Schools, indicating that there was an increase in donations after the impact report and annual appeal letter were published. She thanked all board members who have met the requirements per the board covenant to contribute financially or through their expertise.
- 11. Manager of Compliance and Special Projects Update by Lydia Garcia:** Lydia reported that seven of ten board members meet or exceed the board covenant requirements around attendance to board meetings. 3 board members and 1 committee member are below the required attendance for board and committee meetings. She also reported that all board members filed their Form 700 on time and thanked them for doing so.



12. Finance Committee Report by Louisa Wee, Committee Chair: Louisa Wee reported that the Finance Committee received updates on some of the specific audit findings at that time and that the additional information at today's meeting was helpful. She also noted that the BSS team provided updates on enrollment and ADA, and that the organization is generally on track with its overall financial performance.

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

- 2025-26 School Enrollment Overview: Sebastian shared enrollment numbers, showing a small increase of 0.49% from this time in comparison to the 24-25 school year. 3,727 students were enrolled during March 2026, compared to 3,709 in March, 2025. He also reported that while enrollment is 1.4% below budget, ADA is 1.43% above budget, effectively offsetting the enrollment variance and resulting in a positive overall budget position.

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

- Financial Dashboard & Monthly Financials Ending 1/31/26: Elijah provided an overview of financial performance of the organization. When we started the year, the budget was projecting a net income of -\$332K. Year end Forecast with financials through 1/31/26 are projected to be at -\$100K. The improvement is primarily driven by grant-funded activity and partially offset by student attrition. Core operations remain near breakeven. For expenses, he reported that the increase of \$800K was mostly driven by the expenses tied to the restricted grants that we recognized. Elijah also provided a comparison of budget vs. Year End Forecast for all Bright Star Schools. He indicated that five schools are above target and three are below but stable. RKMS is working towards breaking even through forecast meetings. Overall, Bright Star Schools are trending more positively than what was budgeted.
- Independent Audit Report: After highlighting Andrew and Ira's earlier comments about the audit report, Elijah shared that the report should be ready in the next few weeks and will likely be a "clean" audit report. In terms of the findings that were flagged, Elijah shared that BSS will be implementing ongoing lease schedule tracking and review and strengthening internal controls to prevent recurrence of errors.
- Facilities Updates: Elijah shared that the projects for SHCA and RKMS are currently on hold and there are no new updates to provide at this time on either project. In terms of the SECA - St. Bernadette site, we are exploring campus consolidation. Lease terms are under negotiation to ensure affordability. Elijah also provided that the final punchlist and closeout for VAES is in progress. He also shared that Mediation with the contractor and their counsel is scheduled for April 8.

15. Approval of Consent Agenda: Andrew Murr asked if any board members wished to remove items on the consent agenda, noting that the Independent Audit Report will be removed as it is not yet complete. 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 February 24, 2026
- Minutes of the Academic Committee meeting on March 23, 2026



- Minutes of the Governance Committee meeting on March 23, 2026
- Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on March 26, 2026

Finance and Facilities

- Financial Dashboard & Monthly Financials Ending 1/31/2026: Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Forecast, and Budget-to-Actuals

Alyce moved to approve the consent agenda, 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			
Stephen Green				x
Dr. Roberta Benjamin				x
Alyce Johnson	x			
David Chang				x
Total	7	0	0	3
Motion Carries?	Yes			

16. Closed Session: PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (Gov. Code section 54957(b)(1).) Title: Lead Executive Officer: All Board members and Ana Martinez entered a closed session at 6:23 p.m. and returned at 6:44p.m. There were no actions to report from the closed session.

17. Adjournment: There being no further business, Andrew Murr called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Alyce Johnson moved, and Marisol Leon seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.



Signed by:

Andrew Murr

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Andrew Murr, Board Chair

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Lydia Garcia

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