



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, May 6, 2025** 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 Andrew Murr, Lois Levy, Dr. Marissiko Wheaton-Greer, Alyce Johnson, Jen Cole, Louisa Wee, Stephen Green, and Dr. Roberta Benjamin.

Bright Star Schools staff in attendance were Ana Martinez, Liliana Bustos, Angelina Calderon, Gene Castro, Lydia Garcia, Darryl Garris, Sunil Kewalramani, Dr. Eliza KimLy, Alexandra Lee, Megan Howell, Michael Hoover, May Oey, Andres Paniagua, Marni Parsons, Elijah Sugay, and Sebastian Valdes.

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** - None made.
3. **Chief Executive Officer Presentation by Ana Martinez:** Ana shared a brief video showcasing the impactful work by school-based teams across the organization over the past two quarters. She also provided an update focused on increased Board member communication, including the introduction of quarterly email updates. Ana discussed progress on finalizing organizational priorities and goals for the 25-26 SY, highlighting the extensive input collected from teammates through the Values Waypoint, Teacher Advisory Council, and Pulse Survey. Additionally, student and family feedback was gathered via the Panorama and family surveys. She noted that the team is in the process of finalizing the data and will conduct a comprehensive analysis of 24-25 SY outcomes.
4. **Chief Instructional Officer Presentation by Liliana Bustos:** Liliana presented key initiatives aligned with BHAG #1, focusing on improving teaching and learning across all Bright Star Schools. Her presentation focused on ensuring high-quality instruction in every classroom and creating a culture where all students meet or exceed grade-level standards. Drawing on John Hattie's "Know Thy Impact" and the concept of "Collective Teacher Efficacy," she emphasized data-driven practices and the power of collaborative teacher leadership to drive student achievement. She outlined a five-year plan to adopt a consistent, high-quality curriculum across the network, with a curriculum audit in 2025-26 and full adoption in 2026-27. The curriculum options on the consent agenda for board approval during today's meeting included the following: World Languages (Grades 9–12): Vista Higher Learning, aligned to AP standards and culturally responsive, with a proposed budget of up to \$30,000 per school site; Science (Grades K–4): Amplify Science, aligned with NGSS and emphasizing hands-on learning, with a budget not to exceed \$88,000 per site. History/Social



Science (Grades 7-8): Achievement First, rigorous and inquiry-based, with a budget up to \$15,000 per school. Liliana also introduced the Teachers Leadership initiative, which seeks to clarify and elevate leadership roles across BSS. A Teacher Leadership Institute, scheduled for June 23-25, will offer training in coaching, equity-focused leadership, and data-driven planning. She also discussed the “Meeting the Needs of ALL Learners” initiative, focused on using proven instructional strategies to support diverse learners. This four-year plan will implement Bright Star Signature Practices, based on John Hattie’s research. Liliana also shared Spring assessment updates for the Stella, Valor, and Rise clusters and iReady preliminary D3 data for reading and math. She indicated that all schools have exceeded the expected goals except for Rise Kohyang Elementary School and Valor Academy Elementary School as they have not completed their assessments yet.

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

- **Financial Dashboard & Monthly Financials Ending 02/28/2025:** Elijah reported that Bright Star Schools (BSS) continues to maintain a strong financial position through careful budgeting and strategic resource use. Revenues are estimated at \$4.1 million above February forecasts, driven by higher federal funding, the planned use of one-time state grants, and school contributions to the Business Office Team (BOT) at 12%, within the Board-approved range. These contributions support equity and long-term sustainability. He also reported that expenses were estimated \$2.2 million over forecasted numbers in February, mainly due to higher costs in special education, legal services, expanded enrichment programs, increased substitute staffing, and technology upgrades. The updated FY 25 estimates reflect strategic mid-year adjustments to address changing school needs. While some schools are projected to run deficits, all maintain strong reserves, and the organization overall remains financially healthy. Key cost drivers include the 12% BOT fee, increased special education and legal costs, and unplanned retroactive STRS contributions. The BOT’s projected \$2 million net income helps cover school-level deficits, strengthen network reserves, and support future strategic goals.
- **McKenzie Scott Grant Update:** Elijah provided an update on the \$7 million unrestricted grant from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott and shared that the Board approved spending plan includes \$4 million for the VAES facilities project, \$2.5 million for academic initiatives, and \$500,000 for the Career Accelerator Program. To date, investments include: \$45K accrued for teacher planning days under Academic Initiatives, \$203K spent in 2023-24 and \$31.1K forecasted in 2024-25 for Career Accelerator Initiatives. Approximately \$2.72 million of the grant remains unspent. BSS leadership is reassessing how to best use these funds and will present a revised plan and timeline to the Finance Committee and Board in June. This will include reallocating part of the Career Accelerator funds to Academic Initiatives and updating the spending timeline to align with program pacing and long-term goals.
- **Strategic Planning on Fiscal Sustainability Initiatives:** Elijah Shared that on April 24th, BSS leadership presented early work on fiscally sustainable initiatives to the Finance Committee working group. This included an analysis of cost structures over the past six years, review of cost drivers, and a preliminary FY26–FY30 budget outlook based on trends and assumptions. Feedback from the group will guide further refinement. Next steps include sharing consolidated initiatives later in May and continuing financial modeling in June to integrate into the long-term budget plan.



- **Capital Improvements and Facilities Development:** Elijah said that construction of the new Valor Academy Elementary School (VAES) is underway and on track for an August 2025 opening. While DWP delays occurred due to recent fires, BSS met with DWP onsite on April 29 to address issues. Trifiletti Consulting is supporting the process. Next steps include monitoring progress and preparing for substantial completion and a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) by August 1. Additional facility updates included progress at Rise Kohyang High School (RKHS), which is on track to close out in May 2025 following final punch list items. Financial closeout and transition to the warranty period are next. At Rise Kohyang Middle School (RKMS), the State Allocation Board approved the appeal for extended access to Prop 51 funds, and collaboration with LAUSD continues. Also, Stella High Charter Academy (SHCA) is exploring permanent facility options to replace its temporary campus. LOIs have been submitted for two sites—4466 Crenshaw Blvd. (awaiting seller response) and 1815 W Slauson Ave.—with site evaluations and board approvals pending. At Stella Elementary Charter Academy (SECA), several permanent facility options are being explored as enrollment stabilizes. LOIs have been submitted for Bethany Baptist and Marlon Campus, and a meeting is pending with Trinity Baptist. Next steps include ongoing site assessments and drafting options for further analysis.
- 6. **Senior Vice President of Student and Family Services Presentation by Marni Parsons:** Marni shared ADA updates and indicated that it is trending positively, and it's likely the school year will end near the 95% target. Marni discussed 2023-24 suspension rates and related Notices of Concern from LAUSD for Stella High Charter Academy and Rise Kohyang Middle School for disproportionality for Students with Disability and African American students. She shared that the schools have been working to reduce suspension rates by strengthening behaviour support systems. This includes training staff and administrators in de-escalation, logical consequences, and restorative practices. Both schools have implemented Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and now follow an Incident Response Blueprint that prioritizes alternatives to suspension. Deans of Restorative Practices have joined six sessions to review data and share effective strategies, while school leaders receive real-time coaching from the Senior Director of Restorative Practices to support consistent, proactive responses to student behavior.
- 7. **Senior Vice President of Operations Presentation by Sebastian Valdes:** Sebastian Valdes updated on the following:
 - **2024-25 School Enrollment Overview and ADA:** Sebastian reported that Bright Star Schools remains financially stable due to strong Average Daily Attendance (ADA). While current enrollment is slightly below projections, the higher-than-expected ADA has allowed the network to stay within budget and avoid any negative fiscal impact. Enrollment trends are positive year-over-year, with most schools showing higher enrollment compared to the same time last year. In addition, Sebastian introduced a new ADA (Average Daily Attendance) dashboard that provides live updates and real-time data across all schools. This tool ensures full transparency, offering accurate and current attendance information, and will be valuable for school leaders to stay informed and support decision-making.
- 8. **Vice President of Public Affairs Presentation by Angelina Calderon:** Angelina updated on the following:



2025-2027 Williams Monitoring Update: The 2025-27 Williams monitoring list includes 8 of 9 BSS, based on three main criteria: CSI or ATSI status in 2023 and 15% or more teachers without a valid preliminary or clear credential as of the 2022-23 Census Day. While this inclusion was unexpected, BSS is actively preparing for the submission process and site visits. State monitoring ensures all students have access to qualified teachers, safe facilities, and proper instructional materials. The credential manager has reviewed credential data, and the talent recruitment team is prioritizing candidates with valid credentials. Updates to the teacher compensation model, which includes a revised salary schedule that rewards credentialing and advanced education, are expected to boost recruitment. Moving forward, hiring teachers without credentials will require Executive Leadership Team approval. It was also highlighted that RKES and VAMS were previously monitored and passed with 100% compliance.

Prop 28: 2023-24 Reports: In June 2024, the Bright Star Schools (BSS) Board approved an expenditure plan for Proposition 28 funds, which are designated for arts and music education. The California Department of Education (CDE) has requested that the Board approve the 2023-24 Annual Report, confirming that no funds were used during that fiscal year. The report notes that, as of 2023-24, no funds have been spent yet, but the expenditure plan is in place to ensure the funds will be used within the required timeframe.

The report also shows zero full-time equivalent teachers, personnel, aides, and students served for the current year, with no school sites yet providing arts education with grant funds. Instructional Continuity Plan: The ICP outlines how the organization will continue teaching and learning during emergencies or natural disasters. This plan is required by the California Department of Education and must be included in each school's Comprehensive School Safety Plan by July 1. It is also necessary to meet J-13A emergency funding requirements. The ICP includes key components such as communication, technology access, instructional and assessment plans, student support services, professional learning, and a smooth return to in-person learning.

J-13A for SHCA: SHCA qualifies for a J-13A emergency attendance waiver due to material decrease in attendance caused by false bomb threats, with rates as low as 62.71%. Although instructional day and minute requirements were met, the drop meets the state's "material decrease" threshold (attendance at 90% or below of normal attendance). The form allows schools to recover lost funding from such events. Angelina will send the form to all board members in attendance today via Docusign.

9. **Manager of Compliance and Special Projects updates by Lydia Garcia** - Lydia reminded board members that the Form 700 deadline has been extended to June 2. Also, the final BSS board meeting of the 24-25 SY is scheduled for Tuesday, June 24 from 5-8 PM, followed by a short meeting to approve the minutes of the first meeting.
10. **Committee Reports:** Committee Chairs gave updates from their respective committee meetings and allowed members from other committees to further comment and/or ask questions.
11. **Approval of Consent Agenda** - Andrew Murr asked board members if they would like to remove or vote on any items separately from the consent agenda. With no objections, he then called for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Louisa Wee moved and Dr. Roberta Benjamin-Edwards seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda as follows:



- **Governance**
 - Minutes from BSS Board Meeting on February 25, 2025
 - Minutes of the Special Academic Committee Meeting on March 25, 2025
 - Minutes of the Academic Committee Meeting on April 28, 2025
 - Minutes of the Governance Committee Meeting on April 30, 2025
 - Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting on May 1, 2025
- **Academic**
 - Curriculum Approval: World Languages, Elementary Science, History 7th/8th
 - Instructional Continuity Plan
- **Finance and Facilities**
 - Financial Dashboard & Monthly Financials Ending 02/28/2025
 - Prop 28 Reports

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	8	0	0	3
Motion Carries?	Yes			

12. Closed session: PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (Gov. Code section 54957(b)(1).) Title: Lead Executive Officer. At 6:25 p.m., all BSS board members and Ana Martinez entered a closed session. They returned at 7:06 p.m. with no actions to report.



13. Adjournment: There being no further business, Andrew Murr called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Stephen Green moved, and Dr. Roberta Benjamin-Edwards seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 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 & Board Secretary