

BrightWorks

2 Pine Tree Drive, Arden Hills, MN 55112

Executive Board Meeting

August 20, 2025

Members Present:

Carol Bomben, Community Representative (Virtual)

Paula Cole, Electoral District 3 (Virtual)

Andrea Cuene, Community Representative

Kacy Deschene, Electoral District 1 (Virtual)

Jessica Ellison, (Virtual) Electoral District 1 (Virtual)

Karen Gabler, Electoral District 3 (Virtual)

Laura Oksnevad, Electoral District 2

Deborah M. Pauly, Electoral District 4

Members Absent:

Bill Harvey, Community Representative

Sarah Johansen, Electoral District 4

Staff Present:

Colleen Feller, Director of SparkPath & Director of Human Resources

John Schultz, Executive Director

Angela Skrade, Executive Assistant, Office Manager, Executive Board Support (Recorder)

Chris Streiff-Oji, Regional COMPASS Director

Tom Wieczorek, Business Manager

Visitors:

None

Call to Order:

Vice-Chair Cuene called the meeting to order at 3:43pm, after a quorum was met.

BrightWorks Meeting Attendee Introductions & Public Input:

BrightWorks Executive Board, and BrightWorks Leadership Team introductions were made. No public was present.

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Approval of Agenda:

Vice-Chair Cuene called for a motion to approve the agenda.

A motion was made by Ms. Oksnevad and seconded by Ms. Cole to approve the agenda as submitted. Role was called. The motion carried.

Financial Update:

Mr. Wieczorek began his update by informing the board the annual audit process begins on August 25. The Auditing firm will present their report at the next Executive Board meeting on October 15, 2025. He then went over the June and July financial reports. He states that expenditures are continuing to be over revenue with the fund balance taking a \$161k hit. He advised this is due to the loss of Health & Safety and EANS program revenue over the previous year. He reported the last 2 months have been a struggle, with cash flow continuing to be tight. He explained that the previous year BrightWorks had a fund balance of 900k, with a \$6 million budget. This year, the organization has a \$750k fund balance with a \$12 million budget. Mr. Wieczorek states the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is behind on READ Act grant payments by 2 months. The fund balance does not cover this, but BrightWorks is getting by. He also advised that the addition of the new Long Term Facilities Maintenance Program would replace the Health & Safety Program this year, so this would also alleviate some issues.

Discussion was held regarding the grant payment process with the MDE. He explained payments first go to the Minnesota Service Cooperative (MSC) organization, then BrightWorks must submit to MSC for payment, after which the state has 30 days to turn their payment around. He says a large part of the problem is timing. He is also working with Ms. Rothbauer (BrightWorks Grant Program Manager) to lessen issues with the Minnesota Education Grant System (MEGS). He mentioned BrightWorks would not participate in the CTE grant again this year.

Questions were answered on the current fund balance policy. Mr. Wieczorek recommended that a new system, or a better way to level out cash flow is needed, as the majority of grant funding is now reimbursement based. It was agreed that the board policy committee will revisit the fund balance policy during the next policy committee meeting and make realistic revisions to account for this.

Vice-Chair Cuene called for a motion to approve the Financial Update.

A motion was made by Ms. Pauly and seconded by Ms. Oksnevad to approve the Financial Update as submitted. Role was called. The motion carried.

Human Resources Update:

Ms. Feller reported that one new staff member will be joining BrightWorks Special Education department in September filling the recently vacated position in Traumatic Brain Injury.

Vice-Chair Cuene called for a motion to approve the Human Resources Update.

A motion was made by Ms. Gabler and seconded by Ms. Cole to approve the Human Resources Update as submitted. Role was called. The motion carried.

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Approval of Consent Agenda:

Vice-Chair Cuene called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

A motion was made by Ms. Bomben and seconded by Ms. Pauly to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted. Role was called. The motion carried.

Leadership Team Reports:

Ms. Feller, and Ms. Streif Oji, shared brief presentations with the board on the programs they oversee. Questions from the board on these programs were answered. Ms. Aasan and Ms. Boots were unable to attend. The board was referred to their presentations included in the meeting packet.

Executive Directors Report:

Executive Director Schultz reported he has been attending Minnesota Services Cooperative meetings with the Assistant Commissioner and other cooperative directors. He stated that discussions around cash flow challenges take up a good amount of time at these meetings.

Next Executive Director Schultz provided an update on the Teacher Apprenticeship program. Reporting that the program has grown from working with 15 apprentices in 2024-2025 to 70 in the 2025-2026 school year. He gave a brief overview of the program, its beginning with the 4 Intermediate Districts, and BrightWorks' current role. He shared that \$7 Million in funding has been approved for Teacher Apprenticeship by legislature. This will be divided between the two organizations offering this program, BrightWorks and Ed Minnesota. Executive Director Schultz explained that a requirement of this program is that the apprentice does not pay for tuition, and the journey worker (Licensed Teacher) managing them must be paid for their participation. The journey worker will stay with the apprentice for a two-year commitment. Teacher Apprenticeship currently offers programs in both Elementary and Special Education. The Higher Education Institution offering the degree to the apprentice works with the signatory employer (school district), the journey worker, and finally the Union who signs off on all apprenticeships.

Questions were raised on Union support and how paraprofessionals can participate. Executive Director Schultz says the Unions have been supportive with signing off on apprenticeships. He explained that paraprofessionals usually will get involved through a district or school recommendation. He stated the program is going really well, and he will have more updates in the future to share on this.

Lastly, Executive Director Schultz reported that BrightWorks will have its annual All Staff Meeting on September 3.

Executive Director's Evaluation Process & Tool – First Reading:

Executive Director Schultz provided the board with an overview of how he created the evaluation process and tool. After development, the new process and tool were reviewed with Ms. Feller, Ms. Skrade, and Mr. Wiczorek. Executive Director Schultz walked the board through the evaluation process and answered questions.

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Vice-Chair Cuene called for a motion to approve the Executive Director's Evaluation Process & Tool.

A motion was made by Ms. Oksnevad and seconded by Ms. Gabler to approve the Executive Director's Evaluation Process & Tool – First Reading as submitted. Role was called. The motion carried.

Policy Review:

Executive Director Schultz reviewed Policies 401, 402, 412, 430, in the first read and policies 406, 417, 418, 419, 520, in the second read.

Vice-Chair Cuene called for a motion to approve the policy readings.

A motion was made by Ms. Pauly and seconded by Ms. Ellison to approve the review of Policies 401, 402, 412, 430, in the first read as submitted. Role was called. The motion carried.

A motion was made by Ms. Oksnevad and seconded by Ms. Gabler to approve the review of Policies 406, 417, 418, 419, 520, in the second read as submitted. Role was called. The motion carried.

MSC Conference Debrief:

Ms. Pauly and Executive Director Schultz gave a recap of the annual MSC Conference, which took place in Duluth. They reported that the event was well organized. The panel with legislative updates was excellent, and the speakers were engaging. They felt it was a great event. The 2026 conference will again be held in Duluth at the Inn on Lake Superior, July 8-10.

HOTT Forum:

Discussion centered around the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year. Topics included district start dates, contract negotiations, superintendent searches and administrative staffing, implementing the new state standards for Social Studies, school policies, and construction projects.

Other Business: None

Adjournment:

Vice-Chair Cuene called to adjourn the meeting at 4:48pm

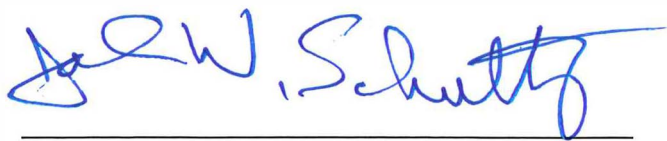
A motion was made by Ms. Oksnevad and seconded by Ms. Ellison to adjourn the meeting. Role was called. The motion carried.

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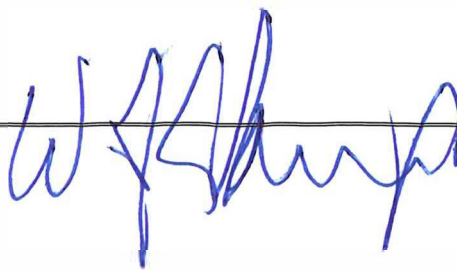
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John Schultz, Executive Director



Bill Harvey, Board Chair

Next Meeting Date: October 15, 2025
