

BrightWorks

2 Pine Tree Drive, Arden Hills, MN 55112

Executive Board Meeting

January 21, 2026

Members Present:

Carol Bomben, Community Representative (Virtual)

Paula Cole, Electoral District 3 (Virtual)

Kacy Deschene, Electoral District 1 (Virtual)

Bill Harvey, Community Representative

Laura Oksnevad, Electoral District 2

Deborah M. Pauly, Electoral District 4 (Virtual)

Members Absent:

Andrea Cuene, Community Representative

Jessica Ellison, Electoral District 1

Karen Gabler, Electoral District 3

Staff Present:

Ingrid Aasan, Director of Special Education, Regional Low Incidence Facilitator (Virtual)

Gina Boots, Teacher & Apprenticeship Liaison (Virtual)

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:

Chair Harvey called the meeting to order at 3:30pm.

BrightWorks Meeting Attendee Introductions & Public Input:

No introductions were made; no public was present.

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Approval of Agenda:

Chair Harvey called for a motion to approve the agenda.

A motion was made by Ms. Pauly and seconded by Ms. Oksnevad to approve the agenda with a change of order. Role was called. The motion carried.

SparkPath Report:

Ms. Feller gave a short presentation on upcoming SparkPath events. The board was asked to share this information with their respective districts.

Apprenticeship/JATC Cooperation Agreement:

Executive Director Schultz and Ms. Boots presented the final draft of the Apprenticeship/JATC Cooperation Agreement, noting it has successfully undergone legal review.

Discussions are ongoing regarding a partnership with the Minnesota Service Cooperatives (MSC) to achieve statewide reach. The program is funded by a \$3 million grant over two years, managed by BrightWorks under a 501(c)3 structure modeled after the SparkPath program. Governance is provided by a JATC board comprised of 50% union and 50% management representatives, with Ms. Boots and Executive Director Schultz serving as Ex-Officio members. Administration will receive a 15% fee for salary and benefits plus up to \$50k annually for operational costs.

The program currently supports 80 apprentices across 30 school districts. The first group of 30 apprentices are scheduled to graduate from the program in spring 2026.

Chair Harvey called for a motion to approve the Apprenticeship/JATC Cooperation Agreement.

A motion was made by Ms. Bomben and seconded by Ms. Oksnevad to approve the Apprenticeship/JATC Cooperation Agreement as submitted. Role was called. The motion carried.

Financial Update:

Mr. Wieczorek presented the financial report with a focus on December, noting a \$1 million revenue shortfall attributed to the reimbursement-based funding model of the READ Act. The addition of the COMPASS staff has increased spending, creating cash flow issues against the current \$800k fund balance. Improvements in reimbursement payment turnaround times with the Minnesota Service Cooperatives (MSC) were reported, but Mr. Wieczorek expects this cash flow issue to be consistent until the fund balance can be increased. To assist with this ongoing concern, he has established a strict hierarchy for expense payments to manage cash flow, with payroll being the top priority.

Additionally, Mr. Wieczorek discussed the possibility of the hiring of ten additional staff members under the READ Act at the request of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), concluding that MDE has been informed that such an expansion is not feasible without secured advance funding to cover the projected \$1 million in additional expenses.

Chair Harvey called for a motion to approve the Financial Update.

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

Approval of Consent Agenda:

Chair Harvey called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

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

Leadership Team Reports:

Ms. Aasan, Ms. Skrade, 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. Boots and Ms. Feller presented earlier in the meeting.

Executive Directors Report:

Executive Director Schultz began his report with updates on board elections, noting that Ms. Oksnevad will remain in the St. Anthony-New Brighton seat until June 30 and that a successor has been appointed to fill the Wayzata seat for the remainder of their term.

He advised the strategic plan review is scheduled for the April board meeting, with the subsequent phase beginning in the spring or summer 2026.

Executive Director Schultz also reported on various workshops and trainings being conducted by BrightWorks. These include an AI design workshop for education leadership, training for Centennial district staff on working with Special Education students in crisis, and the Metro Crisis Team, which has received state funding allowing it to continue throughout the year. He noted participation in the Metro Crisis Team will expand to include more buildings and ground staff.

Policy Review:

Executive Director Schultz reviewed Policy 306, in the second read.

Chair Harvey made a motion to approve the policy readings, the motion was seconded by Ms. Bomben to approve the review of Policy 306 in the second read as submitted. Role was called. The motion carried.

HOTT Forum:

Discussion centered around the recent MSBA conference.

Other Business: None

Adjournment:

Chair Harvey called to adjourn the meeting at 4:33pm

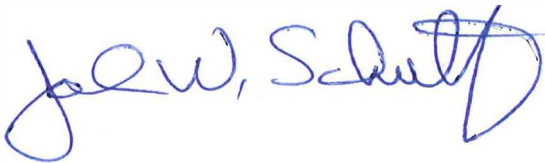
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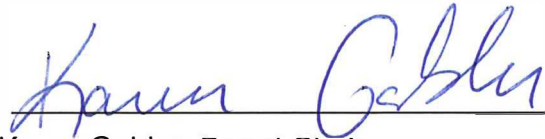
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A motion was made by Ms. Oksnevad and seconded by Ms. Bomben to adjourn the meeting. Role was called. The motion carried.



John Schultz, Executive Director



Karen Gabler, Board Clerk

Next Meeting Date: April 15, 2026
