

BrightWorks

2 Pine Tree Drive, Arden Hills, MN 55112

Executive Board Meeting

June 17, 2026

Members Present:

Carol Bomben, Community Representative

Andrea Cuene, Community Representative

Kacy Deschene, Electoral District 1

Karen Gabler, Electoral District 3

Bill Harvey, Community Representative

Heidi Kader, Electoral District 4

Laura Oksnevad, Electoral District 2

Deborah M. Pauly, Electoral District 4

Members Absent:

Paula Cole, Electoral District 3

Jessica Ellison, Electoral District 1

Staff Present:

Ingrid Aasan, Director of Special Education, Regional Low Incidence Facilitator

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)

Tom Wieczorek, Business Manager

Visitors:

None

Call to Order:

Chair Harvey called the meeting to order at 3:43pm.

Approval of Agenda:

Chair Harvey called for a motion to approve the agenda.

A motion was made by Ms. Oksnevad and seconded by Ms. Gabler to approve the agenda. The motion carried.

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Financial Update:

Mr. Wieczorek presented the financial update, focusing on the May reports. He noted that expenditures continue to exceed revenue, with funding tied up in receivables with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Minnesota Service Cooperatives (MSC). He explained that, because funding is paid on a reimbursement basis, the financial reports will continue to reflect this pattern. He emphasized the importance of maintaining a strong fund balance and advised that the August report will reflect all funding.

Human Resources Update:

Ms. Feller reported on BrightWorks staffing changes. There were 2 retirements, 4 staff resignations and one internal hire to fill a vacated position. Interviews are being conducted for the remaining vacated and new positions. New hires will begin as staff on July 1, 2026.

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

A motion was made by Ms. Pauly and seconded by Ms. Deschene to approve the Financial Update and Human Resources Update as submitted. The motion carried.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

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

A motion was made by Ms. Cuene and seconded by Ms. Oksnevad to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted. The motion carried.

Leadership Team Reports:

Executive Director Schultz referred the board to program updates provided in the meeting packet by Ms. Aasan, Ms. Boots, Ms. Feller, Ms. Skrade, and Ms. Streif Oji. Questions from the board on these programs were answered.

Organizational Meeting:

The organizational meeting began with a review of 2026-2027 memberships and the approval of US Bank & Minnesota School District Liquid Asset Fund Plan Depositories.

Chair Harvey called for a motion to approve the 2026-2027 Memberships and US Bank & Minnesota School District Liquid Asset Fund Plan Depositories.

Ms. Deschene elected to abstain from this vote due to a conflict of interest with her daytime employer.

A motion was made by Ms. Oksnevad and seconded by Ms. Kader to approve the 2026-2027 Memberships and US Bank & Minnesota School District Liquid Asset Fund Plan Depositories as submitted. The motion carried.

Executive Director Schultz discussed current board member numbers, and recommended bylaw language changes for the board to stay with its current distribution of elected members, community

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appointed members and administrative members. Three current board members are resigning at the end of their terms on June 30, 2026. Two current board members have elected to remain on the board for their second three-year term. External and internal board committee assignments were reviewed and some assignments were redistributed.

Executive Director Schultz will begin the process of reaching out to member districts to fill vacant board seats after July 1, 2026.

A motion was made by Ms. Cuene and seconded by Ms. Oksnevad to approve the Board Membership and Bylaws Language as submitted. The motion carried.

A motion was made by Ms. Gabler and seconded by Ms. Cuene to approve the Committee and assignment changes. The motion carried.

Approval of 2026-2027 Budget:

Executive Director Schultz introduced the budget report and noted that the budget was unchanged from the April proposal and had been accepted by the Representative Assembly. Mr. Wieczorek explained that the budget only covers BrightWorks' non-grant-funded operations and excludes Special Education and Collaborative Minnesota Partnerships to Advance Student Success (COMPASS) finances. He stated that the backbone of the organization's administrative operations is the business office and leadership team. Mr. Wieczorek also informed the board of new legislation requiring the organization to make employer contributions through the Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) and Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) for retired/pensioned staff. Employees are not required to contribute, but the organization is. This legislation takes effect January 1, 2027.

Mr. Wieczorek next discussed how the Emergency Assistance for Non-Public Schools (EANS) and COMPASS grants affected the organization's fund balance. He stated that cash flow is currently his primary focus. He explained that he may now submit reimbursement requests twice per month through the Minnesota Education Grant System (MEGS) for the Title I portion of COMPASS funding, which represents slightly more than half of the total funding, but reimbursement requests for non-Title I funding can still only be submitted once per month.

Mr. Wieczorek reported that a Joint Powers Agreement between the Minnesota Service Cooperatives (MSC) and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is in progress and currently with the MDE's attorney's office. The agreement includes metered payments from MDE, which he hopes will improve BrightWorks' financial position in the coming year. He noted that state departments are under a microscope due to fraud concerns and expressed appreciation for MDE's work on the agreement.

Chair Harvey called for a motion to approve the 2026-2027 Budget.

A motion was made by Ms. Pauly and seconded by Ms. Cuene to approve the 2026-2027 Budget as submitted. The motion carried.

Metro School Crisis Response Team:

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Executive Director Schultz provided an overview of the Metro School Crisis Response Team program. He explained that statute requires service cooperatives to maintain a crisis response team made up of professionals who can respond to a situation without being emotionally connected to it. The team includes social workers, psychologists, counselors, and facilities staff. Thirty people initially responded to the organization's request for volunteers, and 25 are now committed to participating and receiving training. Executive Director Schultz stated that he hopes participation will continue to grow and asked board members to help share information about the program with their districts.

MDE will contact Executive Director Schultz when the team is needed for deployment, and BrightWorks is in the process of purchasing an app to contact the team members. A team leader will work with Executive Director Schultz and will visit the site first to assess needs. Grant funding has been awarded and will cover the cost of the app and the team leader. The team leader will be the only paid member of the team; the remaining members will serve as volunteers. The program is open to all, including public, charter, and non-public schools, but will provide additional value to BrightWorks membership. Executive Director Schultz stated that team members will be invited to present to the board in the fall.

Strategic Planning Process Update:

Executive Director Schultz reported that the initial stages of the strategic planning process are being organized with the Leadership Team and will be presented to the board at the August meeting. Board members will be included in the planning process in the fall, and the final 3-year plan will be presented to the board for approval at the January 2027 meeting.

Closed Session-Executive Director Evaluation:

This was a closed session pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13D.05, Subd. 3(a) to evaluate the performance of an individual who is subject to the Board's authority. The Board went into closed session to conduct the performance evaluation for Director John Schultz.

Chair Harvey called for a motion to go into closed session.

A motion was made by Ms. Pauly and seconded by Ms. Cuene to go into closed session for the Executive Director Evaluation at 4:42pm. The motion carried.

A motion was made by Ms. Bomben and seconded by Ms. Cuene to reopen the session at 5:04pm. The motion carried.

Executive Director Contract Approval:

A motion was made by Ms. Bomben and seconded by Ms. Cuene to approve the Executive Director's Contract as submitted. The motion carried.

HOTT Forum:

Topics discussed included the end-of-school-year wrap-up, district strategic planning, superintendent retirements and vacancies, superintendent searches and new hires, administrative staffing changes, school board instability, and bond referendums.

Other Business: None

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Adjournment:

Chair Harvey called to adjourn the meeting at 5:20pm

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

John Schultz, Ph. D.

Karen Gabler
Karen Gabler (Aug 21, 2026 12:40:02 CDT)

John Schultz, Executive Director

Karen Gabler, Board Clerk

Next Meeting Date: August 19, 2026
