

BrightWorks

2 Pine Tree Drive, Arden Hills, MN 55112

Executive Board Meeting October 18, 2023

Members Present:

Carol Bomben, Community Representative
Andrea Cuene, Community Representative
Pat Driscoll, Electoral District 3
Bill Harvey, Community Representative
Deborah M. Pauly, Electoral District 4
Cheryl Polzin, Electoral District 4
Zena Stenvik, Superintendent, Columbia Heights School District

Members Absent:

Marci Anderson, Electoral District 1
Jessica Ellison, Electoral District 1
Karen Gabler, Electoral District 3
Jackie Mosqueda-Jones, Electoral District 2
Lisa Sayles-Adams, Superintendent, Eastern Carver County School District

Staff Present:

Ingrid Aasan, Director of Special Education
Chastity Engelstad, Region 11 Professional Development Facilitator
Colleen Feller, Director of SparkPath
Mary Heiman, Health Services Coordinator
John Schultz, Executive Director
Angela Skrade, Executive Assistant/Office Manager/Executive Committee Support (Recorder)
Chris Streiff-Oji, Professional Development Strategist
Tom Wiczorek, Business Manager

Visitor:

Tyler See, CPA/Auditor Manager, Abdo, Eick & Meyers LLP

Call to Order:

Chair Harvey called the meeting to order at 3:37pm. Introductions of Executive Board members and staff were exchanged. Non-action items were discussed until the quorum was met.

Leadership Team Reports:

Ms. Aasan with Ms. Engelstad, Ms. Feller, Ms. Heiman, (standing in for Ms. Virnig), and Ms. Streiff-Oji presented to the Board on the programs they oversee, Special Education, SparkPath, Professional Development, and Environmental Health and Safety. Group questions regarding details on the various programs were answered. A request was made to add the PD Catalog to the October 18 online meeting packet. A question on Educator Wellness was raised. John will follow up with Bianca and provide an update to the Board.

Ms. Feller, and Ms. Streiff-Oji presented to the Board on the Education Policy Fellowship, and highlights from the fellowship's recent trip to Washington D.C.

Approval of Agenda:

Chair Harvey called for a motion to approve the agenda.

A motion was made by Ms. Cuene and seconded by Ms. Pauly to approve the agenda as submitted. The motion carried.

BrightWorks Executive Board Meeting

October 18, 2023

Page 2

2022-2023 Audit Report:

Mr. Harvey introduced Mr. Tyler See from the audit firm of Abdo, Eick & Meyers. Mr. See reviewed the audit report and the legal compliance report. There was a focus on the EANS (Educational Assistance for Non-Public Schools) program this year, due to the large amount of Federal funding. Mr. See explained the actual amount is larger this year, due to the EANS funding. No issues were found with this. No compliance issues were noted in the audit and there were no audit findings this year. Segregation of duties was not included this year. A question was raised about the decision to not include this. Mr. See says this was a judgement call by the auditors. Due to changes over the year, and adjustments to journal entries by Mr. Wieczorek, signed off on by Executive Director Schultz, they decided this was unnecessary. Mr. Wieczorek confirmed to the group that this is not a concern, and elaborated that there are 3 touches, and enough checks and balances. Mr. See and Mr. Wieczorek reported on the organization's minimum fund balance policy. Mr. Wieczorek reported this minimum will increase with inflation over the years. Discussion followed. Chair Harvey commented on the positive of finally having the audit findings removed, and being grateful that we have the discretion to make decisions on cash flow. The Committee thanked Mr. See for his presentation. Chair Harvey called for a motion to approve the audit report.

A motion was made by Ms. Driscoll and seconded by Ms. Bomben to approve the 2022-2023 audit report as submitted. The motion carried.

Finance Update:

Mr. Wieczorek reported on the EANS program ending September 30, 2023 and additional funding that was granted to BrightWorks to cover runout from October 1-December 31, 2023. He also provided information on additional revenue that will be received through the EANS II program which runs through September 30, 2024. \$35 million has been dispatched through the organization for the EANS program to date, with another \$1.5-\$2 million expected. Mr. Wieczorek expressed that the organization will not continue participation with the EANS III program. A question was raised about what the schools are spending this funding on. Mr. Wieczorek informed the group that he estimates 75% is spent on technology. Mr. Wieczorek reported June, July, August, and September finances are on track. He informed the group Special Education has a new financial system and stated there were start up issues with this, causing revenue to be a little lower than normal. He expressed to the board he has no concerns about the current finances.

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

BrightWorks Employee Contracts:

Executive Director Schultz provided background on the introduction of employee contracts for BrightWorks staff. These were created by the organization's lawyer. Director Schultz explained it is professional to provide employees with contracts, and that the BrightWorks contracts are now in place. Each year Appendix A will be provided to each employee to advise of any changes to salary, etc. A question was raised if staff had any concerns about this. Director Schultz responded that he had defined the agreement between Brightworks and the staff. Chair Harvey remarked on how this move enhanced the professionalism of the organization.

A motion was made by Chair Harvey and seconded by Ms. Cuene to approve the BrightWorks Employee Contracts as submitted. The motion carried.

BrightWorks Executive Board Meeting

October 18, 2023

Page 3

Executive Director Report:

Executive Director Schultz discussed CTE and advised we don't have the grant funding yet. He is continuing to work on this. He reported on the Well Being Advisor program. The framework for this is being built using what the Wayzata School District has done with their program. The hope is to decrease the need for substitutes by having mental health providers available for teachers. The program will have 3-4 mental health providers, allowing our organization to do more for the participating districts. BrightWorks will take on the hiring and administrative role for this. Director Schultz advised more information will come as this continues to unfold. He discussed the READ Act, reporting that at this point, we still don't know where we stand. The group that is working with the state will have 9 different centers, transferring regional centers back to a cooperative model. The state still has a lot of work to do on this. The hope was to have things in place for December, but it is now looking like it will be January or February. He states this will be a challenge with the current teacher shortage. The minimum number of staff to hire will be 9 but could be as high as 20. Director Schultz provided an update on the BrightWorks strategic planning. Peter Weatherman is putting together a survey to identify the needs and wants of districts. A question was raised on the organization partnering with Special Education on licensing. Director Schultz advised that the Intermediate Districts are doing the same thing. A decision has been made that it would be saturation. BrightWorks is not taking this on.

Role of the BrightWorks Board in Upcoming Program Additions:

Executive Director Schultz asked what involvement the board wants to have in future programming decisions. He used the READ Act as an example; When we begin to hire staff for this or are making decisions with the Minnesota Department of Education. What is the board's comfort level with the Executive Director making these decisions. If he needs to spend some of the fund balance, he will still bring the decision to the board. Chair Harvey commented that the board meets infrequently, and John and the BrightWorks staff do a good job of keeping the board informed. It was pointed out that the Board helps to set vision, approves the strategic plan, and finances, but board members do not want to have to approve all hiring requests, or things of this nature. It was decided the board has confidence in the Executive Director and does not feel the need to have a role in these decisions. The board trusts that issues will be brought to their attention.

Minnesota's Hope:

Executive Director Schultz presented information on Minnesota's Hope and the request for Brightworks to sign on as a charter supporter of their statement. The Board questioned the purpose of this. It was agreed that the Minnesota Service Cooperative has already signed this statement and that should cover the organization.

A motion was made by Chair Harvey and seconded by Ms. Cuene to deny approval of Minnesota's Hope. The motion carried.

Identifying BrightWorks Board Members:

Executive Director Schultz proposed holding a board election after the November general election. He stated the goal is to have 8 elected officials on the BrightWorks Board.

A motion was made by Chair Harvey and seconded by Ms. Stenvik to approve Identifying BrightWorks Board Members as submitted. The motion carried.

Policy Approvals:

Executive Director Schultz reviewed Policies 410, 413, 414, 522, 524, 703 in annual review and Policies 101,101.1, 104, 201, 202, 203, 203.1, 203.2, 203.5, and 203.6 in second read, and proposed adding the Child Safety Policy.

BrightWorks Executive Board Meeting

October 18, 2023

Page 4

Chair Harvey called for a motion to approve the policy readings.

A motion was made by Ms. Bomben and seconded by Ms. Cuene to approve the annual review of Policies 410, 413, 414, 522, 524, 703 with the following additions: Annual policies will be reviewed as first and second reading.

A motion was made by Ms. Cuene and seconded by Ms. Polzin to approve the revisions to Policies 101,101.1, 104, 201, 202, 203, 203.1, 203.2, 203.5, and 203.6 in the second read as submitted.

A motion was made by Chair Harvey and seconded by Ms. Cuene to approve the Child Safety Policy as submitted. The motions carried.

Minnesota Service Cooperative Conference Report:

Chair Harvey, Ms. Cuene, Ms. Bomben, and Ms. Pauly reported on attending the Minnesota Service Cooperatives Conference. It was well organized, and the group enjoyed the speakers and breakout sessions. Members agreed attending this event is always a great opportunity. A request was made for 2024 Conference dates to be emailed to the Board.

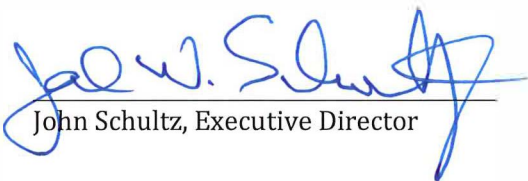
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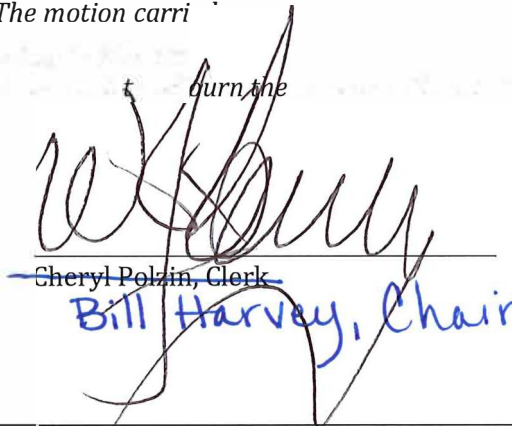
Topics discussed included upcoming district board elections, candidates, and groups bringing partisan agendas to boards.

Other Business: None

Adjournment:

Chair Harvey called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:36pm *A motion was made by Ms. Polzin and seconded by Ms. Driscoll to adjourn the meeting. The motion carri*


John Schultz, Executive Director


Cheryl Polzin, Clerk
Bill Harvey, Chair

Next Meeting Date: January 17, 2024
