



# Brighten Academy

## Brighten Academy Governing Board Meeting

Published on July 27, 2026 at 5:13 PM EDT

Amended on July 27, 2026 at 6:06 PM EDT

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### Date and Time

Monday July 27, 2026 at 6:00 PM EDT

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The Brighten Academy Governing Board will meet on Monday, July 27, 2026 at 6:00 pm, in the media center..

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### Agenda

|  | Purpose | Presenter |
|--|---------|-----------|
|--|---------|-----------|

#### I. Opening Items

- |    |                           |                 |               |
|----|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| A. | Call the Meeting to Order |                 | Jamilia Smith |
| B. | Record Attendance         |                 | LaKia Bryant  |
| C. | Adoption of Agenda        | Vote            | Jamilia Smith |
| D. | Approval of Minutes       | Approve Minutes | LaKia Bryant  |

#### II. Public Comment

Public comment should be received by the Board Secretary or Board Chair 24 hours prior to a scheduled Board meeting.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Purpose | Presenter              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------------------------|
| <a href="https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSceTrI9e71uncQV4LjSCeqoav9ibYxtPu3Y-mM2hH4CvmiKIA/viewform">https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSceTrI9e71uncQV4LjSCeqoav9ibYxtPu3Y-mM2hH4CvmiKIA/viewform</a> |         |                        |
| A. Acknowledgment of Guests                                                                                                                                                                                           | FYI     | Jamilia Smith          |
| <b>III. Executive Committee</b>                                                                                                                                                                                       |         |                        |
| A. Building Brighten's Fundraising Future                                                                                                                                                                             | FYI     | LaWanna Ross           |
| B. 2026-2027 Transition Update                                                                                                                                                                                        | Discuss | Jamilia Smith          |
| <b>IV. Finance Committee</b>                                                                                                                                                                                          |         |                        |
| A. Finance Committee                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Discuss | Matthew Vitale         |
| • Monthly Financials                                                                                                                                                                                                  |         |                        |
| <b>V. School Leadership Report</b>                                                                                                                                                                                    |         |                        |
| A. Information Only                                                                                                                                                                                                   | FYI     | Toni Washington-Knight |
| <b>VI. Governance Committee</b>                                                                                                                                                                                       |         |                        |
| A. Info Only                                                                                                                                                                                                          | FYI     | Evony Hammonds         |
| F24- Personnel Separation                                                                                                                                                                                             |         |                        |
| B. Items for Vote                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Vote    | Evony Hammonds         |
| Policies:                                                                                                                                                                                                             |         |                        |
| Social Media Policy                                                                                                                                                                                                   |         |                        |
| H24- Bullying Directive                                                                                                                                                                                               |         |                        |
| <b>VII. Executive Session</b>                                                                                                                                                                                         |         |                        |
| A. Exec Session Voting                                                                                                                                                                                                |         |                        |
| <b>VIII. Local SBOE/Chamber Events</b>                                                                                                                                                                                |         |                        |

|  | Purpose | Presenter |
|--|---------|-----------|
|--|---------|-----------|

**IX. Other Business**

**A. Announcements**

FYI

All

**X. Closing Items**

**A. Adjourn Meeting**

FYI

Jamilia Smith

# Coversheet

## Building Brighten's Fundraising Future

|                          |                                           |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>Section:</b>          | III. Executive Committee                  |
| <b>Item:</b>             | A. Building Brighten's Fundraising Future |
| <b>Purpose:</b>          | FYI                                       |
| <b>Submitted by:</b>     |                                           |
| <b>Related Material:</b> | Brighten Board OnePager.pdf               |

## PREPARED FOR BRIGHTEN ACADEMY

# Building Brighten's Fundraising Future

What a thriving development program makes possible, and the decisions ahead of this board

## The opportunity in front of Brighten

Public dollars fund a strong baseline; philanthropy funds the margin of excellence: expanded programs, invested teachers, growing facilities, and lasting resilience. The room to grow is real: charter students in 18 studied cities received \$7,796 less per pupil than district peers, a 33% difference driven by local funding (University of Arkansas, 2020; Atlanta: \$10,841), and Georgia charter facilities grants depend on annual appropriations (O.C.G.A. 20-2-2068.2). The good news is that generosity is abundant: Americans gave a record \$592.5 billion in 2024, with individuals giving \$392.45 billion, 66% of all giving (Giving USA 2025). A family-rooted annual fund puts Brighten in the flow of that generosity.

## What a complete program contains

Seven building blocks: a written case for support; a diversified revenue mix (annual fund, events, grants and sponsorships, major gifts, planned giving); a donor journey from first gift to lifelong champion; welcoming infrastructure (CRM, gift acceptance policy, acknowledgment process per IRS Pub. 1771); an annual development calendar; an engaged board; and clear measures of growth. None of these require staff on day one. All of them flourish with clear ownership. On structure: Brighten can receive gifts directly, and many charter schools also establish a friends-of 501(c)(3) foundation to give donors added confidence and keep philanthropic funds clearly distinct from public dollars. The right structure for Brighten is a decision to make with counsel during discovery.

## Who does what: the board initiates and champions; leadership owns and grows it

**Board:** authorizes the program, approves policy and budget, gives at 100%, opens doors, then champions leadership's success.

**ED (business side):** operational owner. Development thrives here: budgets, contracts, CRM, gift acceptance, reconciliation.

**Academic Leader:** chief storyteller and co-owner. Student growth, teacher voices, the face of the mission with funders.

**Parent organization:** keeps doing what it does well, coordinated through one shared fundraising calendar.

**Development function:** staff or fractional partner, reporting to administration, growing the work day to day.

## An investment that multiplies

Mature development programs return roughly \$3 to \$5 for every \$1 invested (sector benchmarks; Greenfield, AFP/Wiley: overall cost about \$0.20 per dollar raised), and giving is growing: sector dollars raised rose 5.0% in 2025, the strongest growth in five years, with donor retention improving to 43.3% (AFP Fundraising Effectiveness Project). Year one plants: infrastructure, relationships, and the case. Years two and three harvest. Boards that commit to an 18 to 24 month runway position their program to flourish rather than cutting it just before it blooms.

## Brighten's abundance: the proof is already in the building

Brighten opened in 2006 with about 275 students as the first Georgia charter founded by teachers and serves more than 800 today. The school outperforms Douglas County and Georgia averages on the Milestones while serving a majority economically disadvantaged student body, with EL Education network credentials since 2014: the excellence-plus-equity proof of concept funders seek. Add board giving already in place, event experience, a stable public funding base, a built-in family community and active PTO, a full administrative team, and deep Douglasville networks. This is a school positioned to multiply what is already working.

## Three decisions for this board

1. What should philanthropy make possible? Name the priorities beyond public dollars; this becomes the case for support.
2. What will we invest in capacity? Set a development budget with an 18 to 24 month runway for the program to take root.
3. How will we build it? Full-time hire, fractional partner, or hybrid, matched to today's stage and tomorrow's potential.

*Suggested next step: a short discovery and assessment phase, routed through the Executive Director, to answer all three with data.*