BRIGHTEN
ACADEMY

Brighten Academy

Minutes

Brighten Academy Governing Board Meeting

Date and Time
Monday August 24, 2026 at 6:00 PM

The Brighten Academy Governing Board will meet on Monday, August 24, 2026 at 6:00 pm, in the media center..

Directors Present
E. Hammonds, J. Smith, L. Bryant, M. Vitale, R. Coffee, T. Cabrera

Directors Absent
None

Ex Officio Members Present
T. Washington-Knight

Non Voting Members Present
T. Washington-Knight

Guests Present
A. Cameron, C. Johnson, C. Sparks, D. Davis, S. Littles

I. Opening Items

A.

Call the Meeting to Order

J. Smith called a meeting of the board of directors of Brighten Academy to order on Monday Aug 24, 2026 at 6:05 PM.

B. Record Attendance

C. Adoption of Agenda

J. Smith made a motion to adopt the agenda for 8/24/26 as printed.
M. Vitale seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Approval of Minutes

E. Hammonds made a motion to approve the minutes from Brighten Academy Governing Board Meeting on 08-10-26.
L. Bryant seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Executive Committee

A. Strategic Plan Update

LaKia Bryant walked the board through the three core strategic planning documents: the analysis, draft strategic plan, and the trackers that accompany the plan. The review highlighted alignment issues between narrative and implementation materials, key gaps in academic outcome metrics, structural risks in owner assignments, and several renewal-related red flags that must be addressed ahead of the upcoming charter review. Following discussion, the board agreed to hold **working sessions over the next two weeks** to reconcile documents, establish clear owners, finalize missing numerical targets, and populate the red-flag remediation tracker. Outcomes from these working sessions will be presented at the **next board meeting** for finalization prior to the **board retreat**.

B. Board Retreat Update

Evony Hammonds presented preliminary details for the upcoming Board Retreat, sharing information on three potential facilitators proposals and three venue options were also proposed. She highlighted **Kenya Elder with Lead 180 Coaching and Consulting** as a facilitator as a recommendation based on the proposal shared in advance of board meeting and the **Hilton Garden Inn** as one of the proposed locations, again shared in advance of the meeting.
During the discussion, Matt asked whether **Lead 180** is state board-certified, noting that if they are certified, we could enable the board to receive formal credit. Evony clarified that Lead 180 is **not** state board-certified; however, she noted that board members can still receive applicable board credit through other approved avenues.
The board agreed to move forward with proposed recommended facilitator and location.

E. Hammonds made a motion to move forward with Kenya Elder with Lead 180 Coaching and Consulting as the board retreat facilitator, as presented and the Hilton Garden Inn as the board retreat location as presented.
T. Cabrera seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

C. Board Training Update

BOT Training needed, 3 hour board training credit elsewhere, if our retreat doesn't count, Chris/Candy provide training focused on us and our school... governance/finance - Monday evenings? (October and after holiday) - deadline by end of year, link to a form for tracking purposes, to turn in. 3-hr financial training component. Board Savvy expires on Aug 31st.

D. Bylaws

The board discussed the need to review the current Bylaws for formatting and grammatical corrections, as well as alignment with existing policies. **Jamilia and Evony** will lead this review to ensure consistency with administrative practices. Any recommended updates or changes that emerge from their review will be brought back to the board for consideration and, if necessary, a formal vote.

III. Finance Committee

A. Finance Committee

The board reviewed the status of the **June financials**, which remain open pending completion of the audit and year-end closeout. A vote will be held once those financials are fully finalized.
The board also emphasized the importance of moving forward with the **Compensation Study** sooner rather than later. Administration will notify the board once they have the capacity to begin the process.

B. Audit Update

The board received an update that the audit is now gaining momentum under the leadership of **Ms. Wells**, **Mrs. Johnson**, **Mr. Canady**, and the governing finance committee. Their collective goal is to complete all remaining required audit tasks by the end of the week.

IV. School Leadership Report

A. Information Only

Executive Director Washington-Knight provided an extensive update covering staffing, operations, compliance, safety, academics, and organizational health.

Staffing & Infrastructure

- **Staffing Transition:** Chuck Canady officially began last week as Finance Manager.
- **Technology/Infrastructure Needs:** Significant tech gaps remain, including teacher laptop replacements and additional access points for the café and Building 1 administrative hallway.
- **Vendor Contract Review:** Administration is compiling a full vendor roster with contract start and end dates. Several contracts, such as **GPI Security LLC**, have expired in March 2026 with updated pricing, creating urgency around tracking and renewing agreements.
- **Athletics Funding:** Ongoing concerns regarding funding levels for athletics.

Matters Requiring Board Approval

- Surplus list presented for approval.

Risk, Compliance & Accreditation

- **Charter Compliance:** Requirements are actively being addressed.
- **Accreditation:** Leadership is reviewing documentation processes for re-accreditation and awaiting guidance on next steps.
- **Financial Oversight:** Under Ms. Wells, Mrs. Johnson, and Mr. Canady, financial operations are aligned with expectations. Payroll remains on schedule, compensation matrix updates are in progress, and Mr. Canady has full system access.
- **HR/Finance Shared Drive:** HR established a shared drive housing forms, reports, TRS materials, onboarding/offboarding processes, and retiree documentation.

Safety & Security

- Administration is meeting with multiple **panic alert system** vendors to determine the best solution for district and state compliance.
- Aubriel Cameron met with the Douglas County Sheriff's Office to outline **no-cost background screening** available through an existing MOU.
- **Fire Inspector Visit (Aug 3):** The inspection identified 14 deficiencies; a binder with documentation was presented, and the facilities supervisor is coordinating corrective actions.

TEKS/LKES & Instructional Leadership

- All administrators are completing certification/recertification ahead of the 2026-27 evaluation cycle.
- Instructional walk-throughs will be conducted as a leadership team for calibration.
- Executive Director Washington-Knight completed certification with the GA Department of Education to evaluate school leaders.

- A classroom observation calendar is being developed.

Risk & Compliance – Hartford Account

- Mr. Canady is working to resolve issues with the Hartford workers' compensation account to ensure full compliance.

Audit & Strategic Plan

- Updates previously discussed (audit progress and strategic plan alignment).

KPIs & Academic Data

- Reviewing **i-Ready** data to identify students needing support or enrichment

Technology Implementation & Organizational Health

- Ongoing meetings continue to refine processes and build sustainable systems.

Enrollment

- Current enrollment is **775 students**.
- Mrs. Scherer completed 5+ school tours in the past two weeks and is actively contacting families on the waitlist to fill available seats.

Accomplishments

- Established a **panel process** for evaluating student athlete candidates, including the Athletic Director, coach, two parent/community members, and possibly an administrator.
- Implemented a scoring rubric for all sports to ensure consistency and fairness during tryouts.

Additional Notes

- **September Saturdays:** Brighten Academy will participate on 9/19 and 9/26 (11 a.m.–4 p.m.) as part of recruitment and marketing efforts.
- **Logo Refresh:** Met with Christine Stanley of Design Solution on Aug 18 to discuss a potential high-resolution logo refresh and marketing plan.
- **Athletics Sponsorship Packet:** Coach Gray and the Executive Director are developing a four-tier sponsorship packet to support athletic funding; the sponsorship program will serve as the official athletics fundraiser.

B. Staff Updates: Areas of Function

V. Governance Committee

A.

Policies for Vote

E. Hammonds made a motion to to revised wording in F39 to include parental leave, additional birthing leave, and a notification on how to file for this type of leave.
L. Bryant seconded the motion.
- Will revisit the definition of "Critical Leave" to be include in policy as it is reference in staff handbook.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Info Only

E9 Social Media Policy is now located at F51

C. Board Member Annual Commitment

Signed and Submitted by all 6 board members

VI. Other Business

A. Announcements

Acknowledgements

- Matthew Vitale recognized and gave appreciation to the new board members.
- Aubriel Cameron offered acknowledgements to her team, including **C. Canady**, **C. Johnson**, **Mrs. Washington**-**Knight**, and **Ms. Wells**, highlighting their contributions and support.

VII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
J. Smith