



Minutes
Board of Directors Meeting
June 11, 2025 | 7:30-9:30 am

AGENDA

7:30-7:40

- Welcome and introductions
- Approval of meeting agenda
- Approval of March 5, 2025 minutes

7:40-4:55

- Legislative update and recap
 - Chas Anderson, MINNDEPENDENT lobbyist

7:55-8:15

- President's report
 - Advocacy platform report
 - Statewide Census of Private Education (SCOPE)

8:15-8:40

- Membership report
 - Official 2024-25 reports
 - 2025-26 membership and recruiting – messaging
- Development report
 - Letter from Schott Foundation
- Program report
 - Education Awards
 - STEM Education Conference – August 13, 2025 @ Heritage Christian Academy
 - School Leadership Conference – September 22-24 @ Rutgers Bay Lake Resort
- Finance report
 - April 2025 report
 - FY26 budget

8:45-9:15

- Approval of slate of officers
 - Michael Lamb, Chair
 - Kate Wollan, Vice Chair
 - Dean Broadhead, Secretary/Chair of Nominating Committee
 - Brian Lynch, Treasurer
 - Tim Benz, President
- Approval of new board members
- Board position description
- Annual board survey

9:15

Adjourn



MINUTES

Those present: Tim Benz, Tim Berner, Josh Killian, Teri McCloughan, Brian Lynch, Blake Nelson, Pat Callan, Josh Schultz, Jim Hansen, Heidi Gallus, Jennifer Cassidy, Anna Lima, Dean Broadhead, Mike Brennan, Kelly Regan

Staff present: Michele Skare, Lisa Vosbeek

In Michael Lamb's absence, the meeting was chaired and called to order by Teri McCloughan at 7:33 a.m.

Welcome/Introductions/Approvals

Tim announced that Teri would lead the meeting in Michael's absence. The board welcomed two new members, Pat Callan and Josh Schultz, and introductions followed. Each member briefly shared their background, role, and length of service on the board, representing a mix of long-standing and new members from various professions and with diverse connections to independent schools.

Following introductions, Teri asked for a motion to approve the agenda as written. Josh Killian moved, Brian Lynch seconded, and the motion passed. Teri then asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 5, 2025 meeting. Brian Lynch moved, Kelly Regan seconded, and the motion passed. Chas Anderson, Minndependent Lobbyist, was then invited to provide a legislative update.

Advocacy Update/Advocacy Platform

Chas reported that all non-public student aid programs were preserved in the Final Education Bill, which was passed and sent to Governor Walz. The bill maintained current funding levels and included future increases tied to the general education funding formula. Despite the threat of budget cuts due to projected state deficits, advocacy efforts—including 11,500 emails to legislators and a rally at the Capitol—helped protect these programs. Looking ahead, Chas noted potential uncertainty at the federal level and the possibility of a special session in the fall, with the next regular legislative session scheduled to begin on February 17. Tim emphasized the importance of remaining vigilant and prepared for future challenges, as the Governor and some legislators continued to oppose state funding for non-public schools.

Tim and Chas reflected on the successful campaign to maintain services such as transportation and counseling for non-public school students, noting that it became one of the top issues legislators heard about from constituents. The campaign also led to a significant expansion of the email contact list. Chas encouraged continued outreach to legislators in order to sustain support for these services in future budget cycles.

Mike Brennan raised a question about long-term planning for schools in light of



potential funding challenges. The group also discussed plans to thank legislators for preserving the funding once the bill was officially signed.

Tim provided an overview of the email campaign's results and its impact on legislators. He emphasized the importance of reaching out to both supportive and swing districts, especially in rural Minnesota, where busing issues are particularly critical. The campaign successfully engaged key legislators who needed to hear directly from their constituents, and the metrics showed strong support from southern Minnesota, where schools clearly understood the significance of the issue. Tim also shared that public school employees—such as nurses and counselors—had reached out in support of the non-public schools' position, recognizing that they could potentially lose their jobs if the funding were eliminated.

Reflecting on the campaign's broader impact, Tim noted that it also served as an effective marketing tool for the organization. The platform used to contact legislators received positive feedback for its simplicity, with many participants expressing appreciation for how easy it was to use. Tim Berner confirmed that he had heard similar gratitude from members.

President's report

The conversation then shifted to the organization's upcoming 50th anniversary. Tim suggested holding a celebratory event in place of the Education Awards for that year, which could also serve as a fundraising opportunity.

He also highlighted the upcoming statewide census of private education (SCOPE), which is expected to provide valuable data in response to legislative inquiries. Funding for the study will come from last year's grant from the WEM Foundation.

Membership report

During the membership report, the group discussed strategies for demonstrating the value of organizational membership to schools. One approach involved calculating the return on investment by comparing the cost of membership to the savings schools realized through services such as transportation, textbooks, and counseling. Using Notre Dame Academy as a sample case, they explored ways to estimate these savings across schools of varying sizes, acknowledging the complexity of differing service usage. Even with that variability, the group concluded that total savings for member schools likely exceeded \$100 million—an estimated \$109 million—making membership a compelling and worthwhile investment.

This conversation led into a broader discussion about the long-term financial implications of potential funding reductions, particularly for transportation services at Catholic schools. Mike Brennan noted that beyond the immediate costs, reduced access could result in declining enrollment at both the elementary and high school

levels. In response, Tim suggested developing a comprehensive campaign to grow



both membership and support, potentially timed with the organization's 50th anniversary. Others in the discussion added that gathering data on how such funding changes might also impact public schools could further strengthen advocacy efforts going forward.

Development report

Tim and Lisa provided an update on the organization's financial position and fundraising efforts. They shared that the team is currently halfway to its annual goal, noting that a major donor contributed a slightly reduced gift this year. The Schulze Grant check had been received, and 3M was expected to fund at approximately half of last year's amount. Tim highlighted a letter from the Schott Foundation, which confirmed its commitment to ongoing, long-term support. Lisa added that two grant applications were pending with Boston Scientific and HB Fuller. Looking ahead, they planned to focus on identifying and building relationships with small family foundations in Minnesota that align with the organization's mission, emphasizing the critical role of personal connections in securing new funding opportunities.

Program report

Tim provided an update on upcoming programs and events, including the Education Awards, STEM Conference, and School Leadership Conference. He shared that sponsorships for these events were tracking well and continuing to grow.

Finance report

Brian presented the organization's financial status, noting a strong balance sheet with approximately five to six months of reserve cash on hand. He proposed revisiting the reserve funding strategy in future board meetings to ensure continued financial stability.

FY26 Budget

The board reviewed the proposed budget for the upcoming year, with membership dues and sponsorships expected to increase. Tim and Brian highlighted the importance of expanding the Honor Fund—composed of individual donations—as a way to diversify the organization's funding sources. They also noted a 3% increase in staff-related expenses and transition costs due to Michele's upcoming retirement. The organization plans to hire her replacement in November. We are looking for someone with strong administrative skills. Overall, the proposed budget was balanced, with no significant increases anticipated in most expense categories.

Teri asked for a motion to approve the FY26 budget. Josh Killian moved, Tim Berner seconded, and the motion passed.



2025-26 Board Governance and Annual Survey

Tim presented the proposed slate of officers for the upcoming year: Michael Lamb as Chair, Kate Wollan as Vice Chair, Brian Lynch as Treasurer, and Dean Broadhead as Secretary and Chair of the Nominating Committee. Josh Killian moved to approve the slate of officers as presented; Kelly Regan seconded. The motion passed.

Tim then introduced Pat Callan and Josh Schultz as new board members, noting the potential addition of a third member at a later date. Jennifer Cassidy moved to approve the new members; Heidi Gallus seconded. The motion passed.

Finally, Tim announced that the annual board survey would be distributed soon, using the same format as last year to gather data on board functioning.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Teri adjourned the meeting at 8:54 a.m.

6/11/2025