



Minutes

Board of Directors Meeting

March 11, 2026 | 7:30 – 9:30 am

AGENDA

7:30-7:35

- Welcome and introductions

7:35-7:50

- Legislative update
 - Chas Anderson, MINNDEPENDENT lobbyist

7:50-7:55

- Approval of meeting agenda
- Approval of December 10, 2025 minutes

7:55-8:10

- President's report

8:10-8:35

- Finance report
- Membership report
 - 2026-27 Membership dues
- Development report
- Program report
 - STEM Grant update
 - Education Awards – April 26, 2026
 - STEM Grant update - \$17,500/\$35,000 goal
 - 2026 Honorees
- 50th Anniversary updates

8:35-9:00

- Group presentation and feedback

9:00

- Adjourn

9:00-9:20

- Executive Session (all board members)
 - President's goals and succession plan



MINUTES

Those present: Tim Benz, Tim Berner, Mike Brennan, Dean Broadhead, Pat Callan, Jennifer Cassidy, Pete Deavan, Heidi Gallus, Josh Killian, Michael Lamb, Joel Lans Kroener, Anna Lima, Brian Lynch, Teri McCloughan, Blake Nelson, Kelly Regan, Josh Schultz,

Staff present: Lisa Vosbeek

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 AM.

Michael called for a motion to accept the meeting agenda. Motion made by Teri McCloughan, seconded by Jennifer Cassidy. Motion passed

Michael called for a motion to accept the minutes as written. Motion made by Blake Nelson, seconded by Josh Schultz. Motion passed.

The board meeting began with introductions and updates from various members, including news from St. Michael Catholic School in St. Michael about expanding to include a high school. They are hiring for a principal and starting a freshman class in fall of 2027. Blake Nelson provided a history of his law firm, Hellmuth & Johnson, which developed the building where the meeting was held.

President's Report

Tim said the focus recently has been on the Education Awards and honorees. Sponsorship is moving along with a few to still check off. Moving forward, Lisa will coordinate all the interviews for award winners' videos.

Tim reported on legislative updates, where it was mentioned that MINNDEPENDENT had already testified in two committee hearings related to school safety and security. The meeting covered several key topics, including school safety legislation, construction requirements for storm shelters, and the Educational Choice for Children's Act – the federal tax credit scholarship. Tim discussed the challenges of finding testifiers and shared insights from recent hearings.

Tim had the opportunity to do some group presentations over the last several months – Seventh Day Adventists administrators and teachers, the New Ulm Diocese, Catholic Community Schools in St. Cloud, and MNSAA. Out of those, three new schools joined.

The group also reviewed non-public enrollment figures, noting a slight decrease from MDE reporting last year, but attributing it to fewer schools reporting enrollment. Jennifer Renstrom has jumped right in, with positive feedback on her onboarding process. The conversation ended



with a discussion about federal safety grants, with Tim Benz sharing the challenges and the potential risks involved.

Finance Report

Brian indicated strong financial health through January and February. The 990 is finalized. Tim noted that while there were some transition costs from new accounting staff, these were offset by credits. Tim continues to meet weekly with James and Stacey to monitor finances.

Membership Report

MINNDEPENDENT is at 188 member schools, highest membership to date. The retention rate was 97%.

Discussion began on an increase in membership dues for 2026/27. The group approved a 4.5% increase in school rates, with the rate for larger schools increasing from \$5.25 to \$5.50 per student and the rate for smaller schools and associate members increasing from \$290 to \$300. Motion made by Joel Lanskroener, seconded by Josh Schultz. Motion passed.

Legislative Update

Chas Anderson from Park Street Public, MINNDEPENDENT's lobbying firm, provided an update on the state budget, noting a nearly \$4 billion surplus in the current biennium and a small surplus of \$317 million in the next biennium. That assumes that the legislature doesn't raise any revenue, spend any revenue this session, or cut taxes.

She also discussed ongoing legislative activities, including hearings on gun violence proposals and a school safety bill to allow non-publics to be part of the Safe Schools Revenue Program. Chas predicted that an end-of-session leadership agreement on policy, funding, bonding, and taxes is likely due to difficulties in moving bills through the House.

The meeting continued with updates about Park Street Public's advocacy efforts on behalf of MINNDEPENDENT. Tim highlighted the effectiveness of Chas's team in managing tasks and their strong relationship with Park Street Public, which provides lobbying services for a flat annual fee. The group discussed the importance of providing mid-session updates to members, which Tim Benz suggested doing around the Easter or Passover break, to keep members informed and engaged.

Development Report

Tim started by sharing a side note that MINNDEPENDENT looked into the longevity of some of the donors and funders. One example was the long-term support from



Xcel. With the exception of two years, Xcel has supported MISF/MINNDEPENDENT since 1979. There are other examples of donors dating back to the 1980's. There are several upcoming grant submissions and site visits for various programs, including STEM initiatives. MINNDEPENDENT also submitted grants to Xcel and Schulze. 3M, and Schott will be submitted in April.

Program Report

The STEM Advisory Committee reviewed and approved member school STEM grant applications for the year, with many grants being funded. The committee provided feedback on ways to make the grant application process easier for schools. Tim noted that 3M has two employees on the STEM committee, and Kelly suggested leveraging their new focus on volunteerism to get more champions for school projects. The group discussed the evolution of grant requests over the years, from rain gardens to 3D printing, and noted the absence of AI-related projects in the current round.

The meeting also covered updates on the Education Awards and the 50th anniversary celebration, with Tim reporting that sponsorship efforts are progressing and a special 50th video is in production featuring long-time organizational supporters. Tim mentioned that Dean Broadhead's company created the 50th anniversary logo for MINNDEPENDENT.

Tim shared a presentation that he customizes and presents at various meetings where schools, administrators and staff are in attendance. It's a comprehensive overview of MINNDEPENDENT's current state, highlighting a 16% increase in membership since 2021, with 188 member schools educating 42,000 students, and discussed various services including STEM grants, partnerships, and advocacy work. The presentation emphasized the organization's role as a network and resource for independent schools across the state, with a focus on demonstrating the diversity and size of their membership compared to other educational organizations. The presentation is also used as a member recruitment tool.

The group provided feedback on improving the presentation, including emphasizing how new members strengthen their collective voice and highlighting the benefits of being mission-driven. The group also discussed the importance of explaining why schools should join, mentioning the goal of having a member in every legislative district.

The conversation ended with a motion to adjourn for an executive session.

Adjournment

With no further business being brought forth, the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00am. Lisa Vosbeek left the meeting.



Meeting moved into Executive Session.

March 10, 2026

/s/ Dean Broadhead
Secretary