MINNDEPENDENT

Minutes
Executive Committee Meeting
November 12, 2025 | 7:30 – 9:00 am

AGENDA

7:30-7:35
- Approval of meeting agenda.
- Approval of August 27, 2025 minutes

7:35-7:50
- President's report

7:50-8:10
- Finance report
    - CD renewal 10/12 - $135,054 – 7mo.@4%
- Membership report
    - Renewal status
- Development report
- Program report
    - School Leadership Conference attendee survey

8:10-8:45
- 50th anniversary proposal/timeline

8:45-9:00
- Updates
- Adjourn

MINUTES

Those present: Tim Benz, Dean Broadhead, Kate Wollan, Michael Lamb, Brian Lynch, Teri McCloughan

Staff present: Michele Skare

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 AM.

Michael called for a motion to accept the minutes as written. Motion made by Teri, seconded by Kate. Motion passed.

President's report

Membership renewals are tracking slightly ahead of pace compared to prior years. The School Leadership Conference held in September went smoothly and received positive feedback, averaging 4.7 out of 5 on satisfaction surveys. A new three-year agreement with Ruttgers was executed, locking in minimal cost increases.

Tim recapped a webinar with attorney Sam Nelson on the new Paid Leave Act, noting concern about the impact on small schools. A survey tool could be developed to monitor these effects. Kate shared that her school has worked with Lighthouse Strategic Solutions She commended their guidance on HR management.

The hiring process for Michele's position is progressing, with three original candidates narrowed to one finalist who brings relevant school experience. A two-week overlap period is planned for training and transition.

Tim reported a busy month focused on connecting directly with school groups and administrators to reinforce Minndependent's advocacy work at the Capitol. In October and November, Tim and Lisa will be present at 6 gatherings, including the ACSI regional meeting at Southwest Christian, the MNSAA Conference, Christian schools conference at Maranatha during MEA. Upcoming visits include meetings with the Wisconsin Synod's Southwestern principals group in Mankato, the Duluth Diocese administrators and northern Minnesota Lutheran schools. . He has been bringing our "Stress Busses" as a reminder that schools may not have had busing in August or September if not for our work done at the legislature.

School safety remains a key topic of discussion. Tim noted that Minndependent joined several Minnesota education groups in signing a joint letter to the governor and legislative leaders supporting school safety funding. The proposal would allocate $100 per student for initiatives ranging from mental health resources and staff development to physical school improvements, applying to all school sectors. No movement is expected this year, as no special session will be held; consideration will likely occur during the next legislative session.

Tim gave a brief overview of the ECCA program, explaining potential benefits for public school students via foundation partnerships. Rulemaking is pending with an opt-in deadline of

January 1, 2027. He reported on the administrative transition of nonpublic pupil aids to Michelle Carey, succeeding Greg Sogaard. Tim offered assistance with training as needed to support smoother coordination between districts and schools.

Finance report

Brian presented the financial report, noting no major changes to the balance sheet or income statement. Sponsorships are up slightly, while grant revenue dipped temporarily due to timing. The committee reviewed reserve fund management, which currently provides coverage for six months of expenses. The team revisited whether to continue manually transferring $3,000 per month to a separate account.

Michael recommended holding off on changes until expenses for the anniversary event are clearer. Brian added that while the current allocation is not restrictive, future cost pressures—particularly for Minndependent operations—should be monitored. The group agreed to maintain current practice for now and revisit in 2026.

Membership report

Membership retention is projected at 96–97%, with 5–7 non-renewals among 181 member schools. Some schools face financial or leadership challenges, and the organization continues offering scholarships or temporary rate adjustments where feasible. He noted that while 100% retention remains aspirational, anything below 95% would be concerning. Current trends remain healthy.

Development report

The committee reviewed the development report, highlighting steady sponsorship engagement and ongoing partnerships with the Honor Fund, Athwin Foundation, and Schulze Foundation. The annual report is on track for completion and distribution by Thanksgiving.

Program report

Survey results from the School Leadership Conference were strong, though one session received lower scores. The team discussed experimenting with split-session formats for future conferences to encourage more interaction, recognizing the need for additional space as sponsorship participation continues to grow.

50th Anniversary Celebration

Tim led a detailed discussion on the upcoming 50th Anniversary of Minndependent and outlined a proposed framework for how the organization could recognize this milestone.

Vision and Goals

The 50th Anniversary will emphasize Minndependent's legacy as a *trusted partner and unified voice for Minnesota's private and independent schools* over the past half-century. The overarching goals include:

- **Reflect** – Honoring the organization's history and achievements.
- **Celebrate** – Recognizing the people and milestones that have shaped Minndependent.
- **Invite** – Encouraging schools, funders, partners, and volunteers to engage with the organization.
- **Advance** – Using the anniversary to propel future growth in membership, donor support, and partnerships.

Tim suggested exploring a 50th Anniversary logo or visual mark that could complement the existing branding and be featured across materials and events throughout the year. He also proposed producing a short *historical video* featuring voices from past and present—board members, school leaders, and friends of the organization—to highlight Minndependent's impact and evolution. Board members Dean Broadhead and Teri McCloughan praised the clarity and structure of the plan. They supported developing a special anniversary "seal" that could be used long-term and saw the proposed video as a valuable, multipurpose resource for events, recruitment, and digital content.

Events and Key Milestones

Tim proposed that all major 2026 events include 50th anniversary elements or recognition moments. The Education Awards will remain a celebration of those working in the field but will feature special 50th branding and messaging.

The **School Leadership Conference** will serve as the *capstone event*—a culminating celebration with members, partners, and schools. Long-standing member schools could be recognized at this event, particularly those involved since the organization's founding in 1976.

Regional and Community Engagement

To ensure statewide inclusion and avoid a metro-centric focus, Tim suggested **regional gatherings** or appreciation events in areas such as New Ulm, Sleepy Eye, and Brainerd—communities with deep, long-term ties to Minndependent. These smaller gatherings could recognize local schools, donors, and supporters, and serve as "friend-raiser" opportunities to build engagement in underrepresented areas.

Additional ideas included board-hosted **Lunch & Learn** sessions or happy hours to re-introduce Minndependent to supporters and potential partners, as well as outreach through local organizations such as Rotary Clubs.

Board and Legacy Involvement
Several members emphasized re-engaging past supporters, including the **President's Council** and former board members, through appreciation events or a luncheon. Teri McCloughan suggested inviting a long-time member to speak at such a gathering and provide a testimonial about the organization's ongoing impact.

Kate Wollan proposed offering discounted conference registration for schools that joined during Minndependent's first decade, as a gesture of recognition and to encourage their participation. Teri and Kate also discussed honoring past award winners and community champions at the Awards Dinner.

Brian noted the potential to reintroduce or expand the **Jim Field Legacy Award**, using it to honor significant long-term contributors and highlight the organization's resilience through key moments, such as its challenges in 2010.

Next Steps and Subcommittee Formation
The group agreed to form a small **50th Anniversary Subcommittee** to refine plans, develop a budget, and outline key activities between April and June. Tim noted potential funding opportunities through one-time sponsorships or existing reserves, framing the celebration as a unique milestone worthy of special investment.

Dean Broadhead offered to lead work on creating a 50th anniversary visual mark and related materials ahead of the next board meeting. The subcommittee will also define the event calendar, member-recognition opportunities, and budget estimates.
The board will dedicate significant time at the upcoming meeting to review the subcommittee's plan and finalize the direction for the celebration.

Conclusion
The Board expressed strong support for the proposed direction and appreciation for the collaborative approach. Members look forward to reviewing the refined plan and budget proposal at the next meeting.

Adjournment
Michael entertained a motion to adjourn. So moved by Teri, seconded by Dean. Meeting adjourned at 8:43AM

November 12, 2025
/s/ Dean Broadhead
Secretary