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Board of Directors Meeting

September 17, 2026

Middle School Board Room 225

6:00 PM

STRIDE Academy Board of Directors

Board Attendance:

Stephen Schueller; Treasurer
Andy Lyman; Vice Chair
Tina Barak; Chair
Pamela Holubetz; Director
Carie Essig; Director
Kimberly Carlson; Secretary
Erica Louis; Director

Administrative Attendance:

Eric Skanson; Executive Director
Nathan Schwieters; Director of Operations
Heather Ebnet; Middle School Principal
Angie Lichy; Elementary Principal
Erin Tronbak; Curriculum/SVA
Tanner Bechtold; Technology Director
Niki Krier; Director of Special Education
Kate Hill; Human Resources Director

Organizational Meeting Agenda

1. Call to Order

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

2. Mission Statement

STRIDE Academy nurtures individuals while fostering leadership and empowering students to attain their highest potential in a community-centered environment.

3. Conflict of Interest Declaration

No member of the Board of Directors, employee, officer, or agent shall participate in selecting, awarding, or administering a contract if a conflict of interest exists.

4. Approval of Agenda

Motion: Andy

Second: Carrie

5. Consent Agenda

A consent agenda is a streamlined approach to handling routine matters in meetings, allowing multiple items to be approved together without discussion or debate. Any Board member may request that an item be removed from the Consent Agenda for separate consideration prior to the vote.

5.1. Approval of September 17, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

5.2. Personnel Recommendations

5.2.1. Recommended Approval of Employment

5.2.1.1.

5.2.2. Recommended Acceptance of Resignations

5.2.2.1.

5.3. Financials

5.3.1. September Financial Report

5.3.2. September Supplemental Information

5.4. Other

5.4.1.

6. Public Comment

Three-minute limit per speaker. Comments shall be courteous and directed to the Board. No dialogue or debate.

7. Reports

7.1. Executive Director

Executive Director's Report

Dr. Skanson recognized the L10 leadership team for its work in creating the smoothest start to a school year during his time at STRIDE. He highlighted the team's efficiency, collaboration, and willingness to take ownership of their respective areas. He also welcomed STRIDE's new employees and recognized the contributions they are already making in classrooms, student support, and administrative support roles.

Dr. Skanson reported that much of his recent work has focused on monitoring enrollment and expenditures. STRIDE is currently below its enrollment projections. While this is a concern, enrollment often continues to shift during the opening weeks of school, and STRIDE has historically seen students return or begin attending in October. If enrollment does not increase, the organization may need to right-size some areas to align expenditures with actual enrollment and revenue. Additional information will be discussed during the finance report.

Dr. Skanson announced that the STRIDE Academy Building Company has officially closed on the middle school property and is now the owner. STRIDE will begin planning the next phases of development using proceeds from the bond sale. Dr. Skanson and Nathan Schweiters will work with TenSquare and contractors to gather bids, establish priorities, and determine next steps.

STRIDE has also increased its social media presence through its work with Anderson Hughs. The purpose of this work is to share more of the positive activities happening at STRIDE and help the community better understand the school's programs, values, and identity.

Dr. Skanson concluded that the school year is settling into its normal rhythm, including fall activities, parent events, testing, screening, and ongoing communication with families. Overall, the buildings have positive energy,

students are learning, and staff continue to provide strong support for students and families.

- We have had lots of positive feedback from people jumping in at Stride this school year.
- We have been closely monitoring enrollment projection and spreadsheets. We are below in our enrollment rate. We know that enrollment can shift and change throughout the year. If enrollment does not increase, we will need to change how we look at enrollment and what may need to be changed or shifted in other areas.
- We officially closed on the middle school building purchase! Our building officially is owned by ABC.
- The students and staff are focused and ready to go!

7.2. Cabinet Reports

7.2.1. Director of Human Resources; Kate Hill

The Director of Human Resources continues to focus on building and supporting a strong workforce while improving the systems and processes needed to support STRIDE Academy's continued growth. This month's report provides an overview of current staffing levels, employee retention, recruitment efforts, and recent hiring activity. Updates will also be shared on improvements to employee onboarding and training, the transition to more efficient electronic HR processes, payroll improvements, and increased collaboration with department and building leaders. Additional areas of focus include support and oversight of front office and health office operations, completion of required state reporting, filling remaining priority vacancies, and exploring the implementation of an HRIS system to further improve efficiency, consistency, recordkeeping, and organizational support.

- We retained a strong staffing level from last year.
- We entered the school year with 179 employees. We lost two. We had 26 new hires this school year. We have many new key support positions that have been filled. We are still going strong on recruitment efforts. Our special education department is looking to expand in our staffing with the head of the department and more paraprofessionals to be available.

- We want to make sure our paras are highly qualified for the school year ahead. We want to make sure our staff is onboarded efficiently.
- The new staff will be CPI trained if that is a need for their role.

7.2.2. Director of Curriculum and Academics; Erin Tronbak

- Every school needs to have a Literacy Lead per the Minnesota law. All schools are required to have a local literacy plan per the Minnesota READ Act. It has to be posted publicly by June.
- The data that is coming in is impressive per the fall for the students.
- We are focusing this year on handwriting. We want to support our students in strengthening their handwriting per the literacy needs.
- We will be implementing fidelity checks in the form of walkthroughs and coaching to make sure that everyone is on the same page for their literacy instruction. We want to be teaching literacy in all subjects.
- We have changed our screener from Fastbridge to DIBELS. We switched to DIBELS because the Access score made it so the students would have to be using the DIBELS test anyhow. According to the data, only 50% of students would be able to take the Fastbridge test in K-3rd. Only 20% of 4-8th grade students would be able to take the Fastbridge test.
- The new literacy lead is Sarah Stone.

7.2.3. Grants & Fundraising; Denise Ziebarth (Virtual)

The Community Engagement, Fundraising, Donations, and Grants area focused throughout the 2025–2026 school year on building community partnerships, creating student opportunities, increasing fundraising efforts, securing outside funding, and connecting STRIDE Academy with resources that directly benefit our students and school community. During this report, an overview will be provided of the year’s fundraising and community engagement efforts, grant activity and outcomes, donations and community partnerships, and key accomplishments. The report will also highlight successes and challenges from the 2025–2026 school year, including the competitive nature of grant funding, as well as current opportunities and priorities for strengthening community partnerships, fundraising, donations, and grant support during the 2026–2027 school year.

- Growing Leaders
- Growing Communities

- Growing Tomorrows
- Rewarded 4 MDE grants
- There are a few grants that are being considered with the bees and more community opportunities in St Cloud.
- Fundraising events: Scooters coffee, Crew Car Wash, Harry's Pizza, Skatin' Place, Golf Tournament, etc.
- We are doing a great job getting out into the community! There are many ways to volunteer for different events throughout the year to support Stride.
- A habitat restoration project from Great River Greening. This opportunity could include planting an apple tree.

Standing Committee Reports

7.3. Academic Excellence

- RCA meetings are going well. The first assembly was fun to have at the middle school last year.
- Screening started this school year earlier and it has been very successful for the students.
- Dr. Skanson has made sure the students have their own t-shirts.

7.4. Governance; 10/20/26

- Graduation requirements.
- There are three new policies that were looked at.
- Enrollment policy was discussed as well. It is tricky to follow needs with enrollment.

7.5. Finance; 10/21/26

- August report – We are in between 794 students for enrollment. Middle school students are weighted differently. We are a little low in enrollment at the moment. We may need to look at different programs to see what needs to shift when the time comes.
- Debt service coverage will have to be looked at. We want to make debt service coverage this next year.

8. Unfinished Business

8.1. Policy Updates – Second Reading

8.1.1. 521 – Student Disability Nondiscrimination

Updates protections and accommodation requirements for students with disabilities.

Moved: Carrie and Andy

Seconded: Erica

8.1.2. Policy 524 – Internet, Technology, and Cell Phone Acceptable Use and Safety

Updates acceptable-use rules, internet filtering requirements, and safeguards related to inappropriate digitally created or altered images.

Moved: Carrie

Seconded: Erica

8.1.3. Policy 613 – Graduation Requirements

Aligns graduation requirements with current Minnesota law.

Tabled until the October meeting.

8.1.4. Policy 621 – Literacy and the READ Act

Aligns literacy screening, instruction, intervention, planning, and staff-training requirements with Minnesota's READ Act.

Moved: Andy

Seconded: Erica

8.1.5. Policy 710 – Extracurricular Transportation

Clarifies administrative oversight, employee transportation restrictions, vehicle requirements, and allowable transportation fees for extracurricular activities.

Moved: Carrie

Seconded: Andy

9. New Business

9.1. Policy Updates – First Reading

9.1.1. Policy 709 – Student Transportation Safety

Updates school bus definitions and first-aid-kit requirements for Type III vehicles. STRIDE-specific terminology and dates must be added.

9.1.2. Policy 721 – Procurement Policy

Updates state and federal purchasing requirements and adds employee purchasing limits, emergency purchasing authority, subrecipient monitoring, and conflict-of-interest requirements. STRIDE must designate authorized positions and spending limits.

9.1.3. Policy 722 – Public Data and Data Subject Requests

Adds protections for participants in Minnesota's Safe at Home program. STRIDE must identify accepted payment methods and designate its responsible data-practices officials.

9.2. Middle School Drop-In Center

9.2.1. Review and consider a pilot program providing middle school students with supervised before-school care, academic support, and a safe transition between elementary drop-off and the middle school's regular opening time.

- The plan is to run this as a pilot program to try out until the winter happens. We want to start this by October 1st to make this a reality for parents to drop their children off early. This is not an opportunity for students to be on their phones more, but to work on homework or other academic activities for the students. It is only an hour before school that the school will be open for.
- Question: Why just a dollar to start?
- Answer: Just something we are looking at as an opportunity to grow this possibility.
- Question: How many paras will there be?
- Question: What will the cost increase to?
- Question: How are you choosing to pilot this on campus?
- Question: What is the need for the students and parents?
- Question: Is there also going to be an option for after school care?

Moved: Pamela

Seconded: Andy

10. Announcements

10.1. Next Board Meeting 10/22/2026

11. Adjournment

TIME: 7:09 pm