



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Thursday, September 18, 2025 - 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Perpich Center for Arts Education
Zoom Meeting

Mission: to provide all Minnesota students the opportunity to develop and integrate their artistic and academic abilities to their highest potential.

REGULAR MEETING
APPROVED – MINUTES – APPROVED

Chair S. Grans-Korsh called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm. On a call of the roll, members identified as present: R. Doyle (virtual), S. Grans Korsh, M. Haley (virtual), P. Hustoles, P. Khosravi (virtual), N. Laven (virtual), B. Melville (virtual), R. Salazar (virtual), S. Sampson (virtual), T. Wollenzien (virtual).

ACTION: Approval of Meeting Agenda – Board Chair S. Grans Korsh requested a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Member P. Hustoles moved to approve the regular meeting agenda, member M. Haley provided a second. On a call of the roll with each member voting in favor and no votes against, the meeting agenda was approved.

ACTION: Consent Agenda – Member P. Hustoles motioned to approve the consent agenda with the following items: Approval of the Minutes, Board of Directors Regular Meeting, August 21, 2025 and Approval of Finance Reports ending June 30, 2025 and ending August 31, 2025. Member R. Doyle provided a second. On a call of the roll with each member voting in favor and no votes against, the consent agenda was approved.

INFORMATION: Board Chair Report – Board Chair S. Grans Korsh welcomed new board members and provided an update on yesterday’s appointment of our newest board member, David Hastings. Board Chair S. Grans Korsh asked newer members to identify their board committee(s) preference so they may be added to the board committee rosters. Board Chair S. Grans Korsh thanked those who helped plan and execute Perpich’s 40th Anniversary Celebration and encouraged members to contribute to the 40th Anniversary fund.

Additionally, Board Chair S. Grans Korsh provided updates on the 40th Anniversary as it relates to a fundraising task force. Board Chair S. Grans Korsh encouraged members to review and respond to the request to join an exploratory fundraising task force that will seek funding (i.e., dorm fees). Communications Director B. Anderson responded to questions from Board Vice Chair P. Hustoles.

INFORMATION: Executive Director Report – Executive Director A. Smisek provided updates on the questions raised at the August board meeting regarding changing agenda items from information to action and whether board members should pay for their lunch provided at the board retreat. Executive Director A. Smisek consulted with the Attorney General’s office and reported we are within statutory and Perpich bylaw guidelines to change the item from information to action. Further, providing a reasonably priced boxed lunch to members of the board for a day-long meeting and/or retreat does not constitute a prohibited gift as Perpich is a state agency, not a lobbyist or lobbyist employer. Moving forward, questions regarding ethics or compliance should be directed to the Executive Director A. Smisek and Human Resources Director A. Thabet to allow research to take

place and provide accurate information promptly so the full board and public can receive answers without confusion. Agency questions or concerns should be directed to the Executive Director, not directly to leadership team members, faculty, or staff. Concerns regarding A. Smisek should be directed to A. Thabet. Communication with K. Morgan related to planning board meetings and logistics can be directed to K. Morgan. All other communication should be directed to A. Smisek who will work with staff to respond.

Executive Director A. Smisek reported on the 40th Anniversary event and thanked staff and members of the board for their participation and assistance. Board committee and staff feedback on the Strategic Directions developed at the board retreat included a recommendation to strike the word “radical” from the first strategic direction yet allow certain branches of Perpich (i.e., Arts High School) to include this language as it holds accurate. The second strategic direction will change “to” to “and” with no additional change recommended at the board retreat. And the last strategic direction includes a recommendation to keep the language and develop clear definitions and .

Executive Director A. Smisek collaborated with the Human Resources Committee to define Executive Director goals and metrics. Executive Director A. Smisek noted student enrollment and marketing will be included in the Executive Director’s report to the board. Executive Director A. Smisek will work closely with R. Bullen and B. Anderson to provide the report data. The leadership team discussed and recommended that the Statewide Arts Outreach Committee address student enrollment at a future meeting. Member P. Hustoles provided comments regarding the potential of the Statewide Arts Outreach Committee and prefers the second option to develop a task force of board member volunteers. Member T. Wollenzien concurred that a Task Force where board members with interest can serve. Member R. Salazar likes the idea of working with the data presented to tell the story through marketing showing student involvement and diversity. Member R. Doyle recommended an ad hoc committee as an ongoing group to focus on student outreach through summer camps or other offerings, that may lead to a standing committee. Member B. Melville requested clarity of purpose of the Task Force – is it outreach or recruitment? Executive Director A. Smisek will bring Leadership Team feedback to the Board Development Committee at its meeting on September 24 and bring the results to the next Board meeting to discuss results. Executive Director A. Smisek then completed her goals presentation and stated she will continue to work with the Human Resources Committee on her evaluation metrics toward goals. Executive Director A. Smisek also reported her presentation at the Association of Metropolitan School Districts meeting. Participants include district superintendents and their school board representatives from up to 52-member districts. This presentation led to additional Perpich Center for Arts Education e-newsletter subscribers and requests for partnering to provide professional development. Further, Superintendent Laurie Putnam from St. Cloud and current Superintendent of the Year, and John Magas from Duluth, agreed to co-present with W. Barden and A. Smisek at the upcoming Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD) Conference. Executive Director A. Smisek will participate on a panel with the Communication and Theatre Association of Minnesota on September 19. Comments were provided by members R. Salazar and P. Hustoles.

INFORMATION: Professional Development and Resources – PDR Director W. Barden reviewed progress toward two of the department’s Big Goal and Strategic Goals, including engaging more with administrators and educators at charter schools and working on a white paper looking at chronic absenteeism and arts education. The data shows that the more arts options provided by a school, the less chronic absenteeism from students. The PDR team continues to analyze the data and plan to submit a presentation for a poster session at the Minnesota Music Educators Conference in February 2026.

Comments from Member R. Doyle regarding absenteeism was received. Member P. Hustoles congratulated Dr. Barden on the work and noted we should think about sharing this information with Legislators. Member R. Salazar appreciated the data on charter schools. Member N. Laven

noted the State of Minnesota high school requirements includes students must earn one arts credit sufficient to satisfy all the arts standards and students must be offered at least three. The five arts areas are dance, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts. Member N. Laven thanked Dr. Barden and the work of the Professional Development and Resources team for the white paper research.

INFORMATION: Arts High School Report – Arts High School Principal R. Bullen provided an update on the activities of the Arts High School including the important work surrounding student well-being and success, as well as fostering a culture of resilience and empathy. The Arts High School launched the Campus Live Belonging initiative and expanded access to mental health resources through trusted partnerships. Students have also participated in civic action. Principal R. Bullen further reported on implementing new academic requirements and upholding Perpich’s commitment to artistic excellence. Further, Principal R. Bullen noted her belief that by creating a sense of belonging, coupled with mental health support results in positive attendance. A school safety task force has been formed to assess space and needs and develop protocols to continue to keep students safe. Strong student voice and leadership has been empowering to students and supported by parents. The Arts High School has been working on data-driven work to collect and evaluate student supports. The Arts Exhibition and Dance Performance were well attended and Principal R. Bullen noted board representation. The Arts High School is preparing for Career and Portfolio Day and anticipate up to 30 schools to participate by meeting with students, both to present in a panel as well as review portfolios. There also includes a career component and life skill component.

Comments from Member P. Hustoles regarding student support to keep Perpich as a safe space for students were received. Comments from Member R. Salazar were received.

The Arts High School continues to strengthen family partnerships and foster transparency through hosting the first open house, reaching out to families by survey, and parent-guardian meeting.

INFORMATION Human Resources Committee – Committee member R. Doyle provided an update from the last Human Resources Committee meeting where the committee discussed the Executive Director Annual Evaluation that was presented to the full board at tonight’s meeting. The committee also discussed results from the board self-assessment and some outcomes from the retreat. The Board Development Committee will begin to work to bring forward a draft board handbook. The next meeting will take place in early November where the committee will review the Executive Director’s evaluation, goals and metrics, and prepare a presentation to the full board regarding board involvement in the Executive Director Evaluation. The committee also discussed community building among board members (i.e., one word or phrase response check in question at the beginning of each meeting). The next committee meeting will take place in early November, to be scheduled.

INFORMATION: Statewide Arts Outreach – Committee Chair T. Wollenzien reported a proposal from Executive Director A. Smisek for the committee to shift its purpose toward recruitment and marketing in support of the arts high school enrollment. The Committee also discussed Admissions Recruiter Anne Johnson’s travel schedule and discussed options for the committee and members of the board to support student recruitment efforts by connecting Anne to resources in member districts. Details will be discussed at a future meeting.

Executive Director A. Smisek reported today’s meeting with A. Johnson and noted it is difficult for A. Johnson to have conversations with students and youth directly. If members know of organizations that do work with youth, especially arts organizations of some kind, it would be helpful to connect Anne with those students.

BOARD

DISCUSSION: Board Chair S. Grans-Korsh reported two board committee meetings on June 24, 2025. Government Relations will be held from 3:00 to 4:00 pm and Board Development from 4:00 to 5:00 pm. Board members are welcome to attend.

OPEN FORUM: Member T. Wollenzien provided information from his attendance at the Americans for the Arts National Conference (Aftacon). Detailed information was provided in the board meeting packet.

ADJOURNMENT With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 pm.