



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Thursday, May 14, 2026 - 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Perpich Visitor's Center / 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
MINUTES - APPROVED

CALL TO ORDER: Chair S. Grans Korsh called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

On a call of the roll, members attending in-person were: S. Grans Korsh, D. Hastings, P. Hustoles, P. Khosravi and N. Laven. Members attending virtually were: S. Finnegan, M. Haley, B. Melville, D. Moen, E. Orfield Johnston, E. Winslow and J. Yusty-Rojas. Members N. McComb, D. Pierre-Toussaint, S. Sampson and T. Wollenzien were absent. A quorum was declared present.

ACTION: Approval of Meeting Agenda

The agenda was presented as posted. P. Hustoles moved to approve the regular meeting agenda, D. Hastings provided a second. On a call of the roll, all present members voted in favor and no votes against. The motion carried.

ACTION: Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda consisted of the Approval of the Minutes, Board of Directors Regular Meeting, April 23, 2026 and the April 2026 Finance Report. D. Hastings moved to approve the consent agenda. P. Hustoles provided a second. On a call of the roll, all present members voted in favor and no votes against. The motion carried.

INFORMATION: Deep Dive – Marketing and Communications

Communications Director, Betsy Anderson provided a comprehensive presentation detailing agency-wide communications strategy, accomplishments, challenges, and future opportunities. The Communications Director supports all divisions of the agency, including the Arts High School, Professional Development and Resource Programs (PDR) and the Perpich Arts Library. Communications work is both strategic and relationship-based, focusing on storytelling, brand awareness and board engagement. Board members were recognized as important ambassadors for promoting and amplifying the agency's mission and visibility statewide. The Board was reminded that all communications responsibilities are currently managed by one staff member, requiring significant prioritization and coordination.

Three primary goals for the year were reviewed:

1. Diversification and Growth:
 - Expanding communication efforts across platforms and audiences
 - Producing print and digital marketing materials
 - Increasing agency visibility
2. Engagement and Impact
 - Leveraging the agency's 40th anniversary
 - Highlighting student success stories and institutional history
 - Coordinating anniversary-related communications initiatives

3. External Relations

- Maintaining relationships with legislators and stakeholders
- Expanding visibility for summer arts programming
- Strengthening statewide advocacy efforts

The Board learned that short-form video content significantly outperforms static posts, authentic student stories generate the highest engagement and social media increasingly supports recruitment and awareness goals. The annual digital advertising campaign supporting admissions and enrollment efforts include targeted online advertising campaigns, data-informed audience-targeting, measurable audience tracking and analytics as well as Media Relations. Communications efforts continue to expand across print media, television, radio, external media partnerships while continuing to produce admissions materials, event posters and promotional materials, PDR brochures and conference materials as well as website updates and digital communications. Ongoing legislative communications efforts include legislative committee engagement, distribution of monthly newsletters to legislators and government officials, and Perpich tours and outreach to policymakers. Board participation and advocacy were identified as critical components of these efforts.

Summer camp participation has increased substantially:

- 29 students in 2023–2024
- 45 students in 2024–2025
- 78 students currently registered for the upcoming summer, with registration still open

The number of camp offerings has expanded from approximately six to nineteen camps, including the addition of dance programming. Staff reported that summer programming serves both as a community outreach initiative and a recruitment pipeline for the Arts High School. Admissions tours for families will continue during summer camp sessions.

Board members commended the Communications Director for the volume and quality of work being produced and discussed possible ways to provide additional support and capacity. Several members noted the effectiveness of newsletters, media outreach, and storytelling efforts in strengthening agency visibility and recruitment. Board members discussed the complexity of managing multiple marketing and communications vendors. Discussion also included possibilities for strategic partnerships with higher education institutions and technical schools to create internship pipelines, consideration of direct mail strategies and the associated costs and limited return on investment for statewide outreach campaigns, and the importance of expanding outreach efforts to Minneapolis schools, particularly North Minneapolis, for summer programming and enrollment opportunities.

Board members expressed appreciation for the extensive communications work being completed and discussed several topics, including:

- Potential internship partnerships with higher education institutions
- Opportunities for student ambassador or student communications programs
- Expanding promotional materials into multiple languages
- Use of tools such as Peachjar for broader outreach
- Vendor management and state procurement requirements
- Enrollment-focused communications strategies

ACTIVITY: BrightArrow SMS Message Test

Board Secretary, Christy Coaty, performed a test of the BrightArrow messaging system that will be used to send SMS (text) messages to board members for meeting reminders or possible emergency notifications. The test was successful with only a few members needing to update their contact info.

INFORMATION: Professional Development Resources Report

PDR Director Dr. Wendy Barden's written report was included in the board packet. Members noted the large number of statewide activities planned for the summer months and expressed appreciation for the department's work.

INFORMATION: Arts High School Report

Principal Rebecca Bullen's written report was included in the board packet. Members particularly appreciated the emphasis on alumni engagement and the alumni showcase highlighted in the report.

INFORMATION: Board Chair Report

Chair S. Grans Korsh thanked board members for their continued participation in committee work, including Human Resources and Board Development activities. Key updates included a review of prior board retreat evaluation

feedback and the progress made over the past year, a reminder regarding the August 13 board retreat scheduled from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., information regarding reimbursement eligibility for board member travel, lodging, and meals and encouragement for all board members to attend or livestream the upcoming graduation ceremony on May 22, 2026.

ACTION: Revised Bylaws Final Approval

The Perpich Board of Directors Bylaws have been updated and revised based on input and feedback from the Board Development Committee and Perpich board members at the April 23rd BOD meeting. On a call of the roll, all present members voted in favor of the revised bylaws and no votes against. The motion carried.

INFORMATION: Statewide Arts Outreach Committee Update

In Committee Chair T. Wollenzien's absence, Executive Director Allegra Smisek provided a brief update regarding the revived Statewide Arts Committee, including reviewing prior statewide survey data, potential future work related to the statutory "magnet school" role of the agency, and continued collaboration with statewide arts outreach initiatives.

INFORMATION: Human Resources Committee Update

Committee Chair, S. Finnegan reported on behalf of the Human Resources Committee, including plans to conduct the Executive Director evaluation process later in the meeting, use of the same board evaluation tool as the previous year to allow for comparison of data, plans to review evaluation results during the August retreat, and ongoing work to redesign and improve future board and Executive Director evaluation tools. Board leadership thanked the committee for elevating the effectiveness and professionalism of the Human Resources process.

INFORMATION: Board Development Committee Update

Committee Chair, M. Haley introduced several policy updates for first reading, including revisions to Policy 601 related to strategic planning responsibilities. The discussion included clarification regarding parent objection/refusal procedures related to curriculum and instructional materials and reference to existing Policy 680 addressing parent objection practices and the importance of maintaining regular policy review cycles to ensure policies remain current and compliant. The Board Development Committee recommended eliminating the formal August board meeting and instead utilizing the August 13 board retreat as the primary board gathering for the month, citing the value of dedicating retreat time to strategic discussion and relationship building and allowing the possibility of a brief special meeting only if action items require approval.

INFORMATION: Executive Director Goals Report

Executive Director Allegra Smisek presented a comprehensive annual goals review aligned with Perpich's strategic directions. Progress was reported in reducing contract compliance issues and improving policy review practices. Allegra also reviewed efforts to increase statewide awareness of the organization through participation in AMSD, MREA, MASA, and other statewide education organizations, conference presentations, collaborative partnerships with school districts and educational leaders, and increased visibility among state education leadership. Legislative Advocacy included outreach efforts conducted by the Government Relations Committee, multiple legislative presentations, a campus visit by the Governor's Office staff, and advocacy regarding funding, deferred maintenance, and agency priorities. Allegra self-evaluated highly in the areas of educational leadership awareness and legislative advocacy, while identifying continued growth opportunities in agency-wide strategic alignment and continuous improvement implementation.

CLOSED SESSION: Executive Director Annual Performance Review

The Zoom recording was paused and all Perpich staff members (Except for Executive Director, Allegra Smisek) left the room/Zoom meeting until the review was complete.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chair S. Grans Korsh adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.