

SOUTH COAST EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE (SCEC)

Board of Directors' Meeting February 8, 2024 Minutes

Present: J. Schoonover, M. Ryan, B. Runey, T. Aubin, M. Pontes, A. O'Leary, R. Kidwell, J. Robidoux, J. Cabral, D. Heimbecker, J. Prendergast, L. Thibault

1.00 - Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Superintendent J. Schoonover at 1:04 PM.

2.00 - Minutes of January 11, 2024

The minutes of January 11, 2024 were presented for review and approved.

Motion, B. Runey: To approve the minutes of December 14, 2023

Second, J. Cabral

Vote, All in Favor

Abstained by T. Aubin

3.00 - Financial Information

3.10 - Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust

The OPEB Trustees will be meeting on June 13, 2024, at 11:00 AM to consider future initiatives, policies structural considerations, and retiree benefits. The results will be shared with the Board of Directors during the board meeting immediately following at 1:00 PM.

Director of Finance, Jennifer Prendergast mentioned that SCEC liability is \$8.9 million, and SCEC has \$199,000 in the account currently with \$25,000 added in June through the business plan approval.

3.20 – Updating of the FY 24 Business plan/Budget

Director of Finance, Jennifer Prendergast mentioned the end of January 2024 student count is 225.75. The FY24 Business Plan has 223 students included. SCEC is still in the process of hiring additional staff.

SCEC was notified our auditors are merging with Marcum LLP as of February 1, 2024. Mike Nelligan partner with Powers & Sullivan, is retiring, Laura Stone will continue to be our account manager.

Motion, T. Aubin: To stay with merger auditing firms from Powers & Sullivan to Marcum LLP.
Second, A. O'Leary

Vote, All in Favor

3.30 - FY 25 Business/Plan

SCEC is actively working on the FY 2025 Business Plan. Members can expect a 5% averaging increase in tuition rates.

SCEC does not have a Union Contract for next year. The Union mentioned a discussion about working on 11-month contracts, Executive Director Heimbecker stated it would be very difficult to provide quality care to every student with each individual need, and that job sharing would need to fit the student needs. There will be further discussions.

3.40 – SCEC Financial and Control Policies

As existing policies are honed and new ones emerge, Board member participation and oversight will be encouraged and solicited.

4.00 - Human Resources:

4.10 - New Hire(s):

4.11 -- Preslei Silva – Paraprofessional, 12 Months GHS

4.12 – Madison Costa – Clinician 12 Months

4.20 - Transfer(s): None

4.30 - Resignation(s):

4.31 – Marie Jutras, Paraprofessional 12 Months Berkley Middle School

Motion: M. Pontes: To approve the New Hires and Resignations as presented.
Second, J. Cabral

Vote, All in Favor

4.40 - Retirement(s):

4.41 – Joanne Veroni – Clinician 10 Months

Motion: J. Robidoux: To approve retirement and send a letter to Joanne Veroni, thanking her for her service at SCEC.

Vote, All in Favor

4.50 – Leave of Absence(s): None

4.60 – Termination(s): None

5.00 - Executive Session: None

6.00 - Building Program Update

6.10 – Executive Director, Heimbecker noted they started the installation of the new septic system at LIFE Academy in Swansea

Executive Director, Heimbecker also noted SCEC is looking for a middle school setting for inclusion programs. Our search is ongoing, and SCEC would appreciate any help from the Board. SCEC is always looking at our future and we are limited in classroom space options.

Executive Director, Heimbecker mentioned Richie Shannon is retiring and SCEC will have an opening for a building and grounds employee.

Superintendent Rebecca Kidwell has invited the Board to Seekonk’s fire safety day.

7.00 - Policy and Procedures

7.10 – As current administrative policies and procedures are always being refined new ones emerge, Board participation and oversight is always encouraged and solicited.

8.00 - Internal & External Professional Development – Prepared by Dr. Carolyn McKearney & Frank Gallishaw

8.10 - Internal Professional Development – Prepared by Frank Gallishaw Jr.

8.11 - SCEC Deep Learning Leadership Team held its monthly meeting on February 6, 2024. The team continues to merge the SCEC DL Leadership Team and the SCEC Planning Team. The primary focus of the meeting was to determine the roles and responsibilities of team members moving forward.

8.12 - On January 31, 2024, SCEC held its first of several PD training courses on IEP Improvement Project training. The training team members included Associate Executive Directors Jennifer Faria and Lisa Martiesian, Life Academy Leader Lisa Fournier, GHS Clinical Coordinator Cristen Henderson, Related Services Leaders Linda Cullen and Bethany DeNardo, and Facilitator Amanda Jones.

8.13 – Additional IEP Improvement Project training sessions are scheduled for May 3, 2024, during SCEC site staff meetings, and during our summer session.

8.20 - External Professional Development – Prepared by Dr. Carolyn McKearney

8.21 - The SCEC/BSU master’s in special education cohort – January 2024 started this SCEC’s cohorts fifth semester. The anticipated graduation date is Fall 2024. Cohort enrollments consists of 5 SCEC, 2 Somerset/Berkley staff members, and 1 Seekonk Public Schools part-time member.

8.22 - In collaboration with BSU, SCEC recruited 23 candidates for the bachelor’s degree in special education program. This program is not like the traditional cohort model because candidates enter with different programming needs and course requirements. Candidates are eligible for the Para Grant and Student loans. There is a rolling admissions process. Potential candidates should contact Dr. McKearney

if interested.

8.23 In partnership with other collaboratives and BSU, SCEC has applied for an Emergency License Educator Preparation grant. This grant opportunity will provide \$260,000 per year to support coursework as well as 50 MTEL preparation vouchers.

Executive Director, Heimbecker stated he is very proud of the work Dr. McKearney has done.

8.24- Dr. Carolyn McKearney is assessing potential interest in the following programs at BSU: Master's in educational leadership, Master's in special education, Bachelor's in Special Education, Social Emotional Learning Credential, ASD Credential, and Transition Credential. Memos were sent via email to the SCEC Board Members in January 2024. Please consider distributing them throughout your district.

8.25 - Dr. Carolyn McKearney is providing consultation to Dartmouth, Fall River, Seekonk, Mansfield and Norwood in the 2023-2024 school year.

8.26 – Dr. Lisa Fournier and Dr. McKearney completed a program evaluation of the Transition Program for Avon Public Schools in January 2024.

8.27- Both Initial and Refresher CPI courses are available from SCEC's CPI team. If interested, please contact Dr. Carolyn McKearney at (508) 922-6213 or cmckearney@scecoll.org.

8.28 - SCEC's ESL teacher, who is also a certified special education teacher, is available to assist SCEC member districts in supporting their English Learners in the 2023-2024 school year. Examples of available supports include:

- Support WIDA testing for students
- Support/train staff on WIDA testing
- Consult with classroom teacher to support EL students in the acquisition of the English language.
- Collaborating with teachers to plan lessons that include language goals in listening, speaking, reading, and writing
- Determining appropriate teaching methods for students based on their English proficiency.
- Assessing student progress
- Consult on EL students who also require special education services
- Communicating with and supporting families

Contact Dr. Bethany DeNardo if interested in this service at bdenardo@scecoll.org or call/text at (508) 962-6521.

9.00 - Superintendent Issues

9.10 – The Executive Director's Book Club: Sustainability through developing character, changemaking, and community building is being repeated, because it is essential that its focus is maintained throughout FY24 and beyond.

9.11 - The following comes from page 2 of SCEC's Strategic Plan for 2023-2028 and has been referred to in all recent SCEC meetings: Board, FinCom, SLT, SL, SF, and Union President/Ex Dir.

It is also contained in the newest version of our Annual Report, and it is available on our SCEC website:

Our Theory of Action: Sustainability through staff and students as changemakers

The sustainability of South Coast Educational Collaborative (SCEC) depends on maintaining and increasing student enrollment. As a Deep Learning organization, we believe we can achieve this goal by enabling all – students and staff – to be changemakers at SCEC, in our communities and in the world.

9.12 - Given the enormity of the challenges embedded in our Theory of Action, it would be wise to seriously consider the implications of what Adam Grant maintains at the end of his newest book entitled *Hidden potential: The science of achieving great things* (2023) to our leadership commitments and responsibilities as SCEC leaders:

Many people dream of achieving goals. They measure their progress by the status they acquire and the accolades they collect. But the gains that count the most are the hardest to count. The most meaningful growth is not building our careers—it's building our character.

Success is more than reaching our goals—it's living our values. There's no higher value than aspiring to be better tomorrow than we are today. (p. 233)

9.13 - *Woke a young poet's call to justice* (2020) is a children's book that was recently briefly banned from an elementary school in North Attleboro, MA. It was written by Mahogany L. Browne, Elizabeth Acevedo, and Olivia Gatwood. Theodore Taylor III was the illustrator, and Jason Reynolds wrote the foreword. Exploring the content of this book and a history of its brief banning provides an example of changemaking in action.

9.20 - As a result of SCEC's Senior Leadership Team efforts, SCEC will be receiving State Set-Aside funds for use in addressing student absences.

9.30 - Senior Leadership Team members have aggressively pursued grant resources resulting in new ELA and Mathematics curriculum being purchased with accompanying technical assistance to support adaption efforts throughout SCEC.

10.00 - Other Superintendent Issues

10.10 – National Conference Opportunities:

Executive Director Heimbecker would like each board member to continue to share their experiences when attending conferences.

The AASA and ASCD Conferences are coming up, interested parties should contact Leah Thibault at (508) 379-1180 x 129 or lthibault@scecoll.org for more information.

10.20 – The remaining 2023-2024 Board meeting dates have been scheduled.

April 11, 2024 (Admin Luncheon)
June 13, 2024

The Rookery is booked for the Admin Luncheon on April 11, 2024.

10.30 – Superintendent John Cabral attended the BARR Network Trip to California.

BARR Mission: Is to create equitable schools so that every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, or economic status has access to high-quality education where adults know them, recognize their strengths, and help them succeed.

The importance of student voice is a main focus.

11.00 - Warrants:

Presented to Board Members through DocuSign approval.

12.00 - Other Item(s)

12.10 – Updating and Discussing Leasing Property for Instructional Purposes

Space to operate SCEC programs continues to be a concern for the SCEC Leadership Team. Finding adequate space for inclusion programs continues to be a problem.

Superintendent, Jeffrey Schoonover mentioned the Somerset Middle School transitioning to the new Building, this transition will take place July 2024. The original middle school will be a complete shut down once the transition is complete.

12.11 – Leases have been extended at the Berkley Community and Middle Schools, Palmer River Elementary School in Rehoboth, Freetown Elementary, George R. Austin Intermediate School in Lakeville, the North Grades 1-8 School in Seekonk, the Gallishaw High School in Seekonk, and SCEC's inclusion classroom at Seekonk High School.

Superintendent, Melissa Eakins-Ryan is providing inclusive space at the Berkley Middle School (BMS) to accommodate a portion of SCEC middle school students. This is being accomplished through restructuring the SCEC program currently at BMS and creating an additional classroom.

Superintendent, Bill Runey is working with the Dighton-Rehoboth School Board Chair and Vice-Chair on space for SCEC and it looks to be heading in the right direction. They will consist of 2 SCEC inclusion classrooms at Beckwith Middle School and 5 SCEC inclusion classrooms at D/R Regional High School.

13.00 - Adjournment

Motion, J. Schoonover: Motion to adjourn at 2:12PM
Second, J. Cabral
Vote, Unanimous