

# SOUTH COAST EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE

Board of Directors  
June 13, 2024

## AGENDA

- 1.0 - Call to Order
- 2.0 - Minutes of April 11, 2024
- 3.0 - Financial Information
- 4.0 - Human Resources
- 5.0 - Executive Session
- 6.0 - Building Program Update
- 7.0 - Policies and Procedures
- 8.0 - Internal/External Professional Development
- 9.0 - Superintendent Issues
- 10.0 - Other Superintendent Issue(s)
- 11.0 - Warrants
- 12.0 - Other Item(s)
- 13.0 - Adjournment

# SOUTH COAST EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE (SCEC)

Board of Directors  
June 13, 2024, at 1:00 PM

## BACKUP

### 1.00 - Call to Order:

### 2.00 - Minutes of April, 2024:

The minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting held on April 11, 2024, are being presented for review and approval.

### 3.00 - Financial Information:

#### 3.10 - Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust

If necessary, the OPEB Trustees will be meeting on June 13, 2024, at 12:30 PM to consider future funding initiatives, policies, structural considerations, and retiree benefits. The results of this meeting will be shared with the Board of Directors during the Board meeting scheduled to begin at 1:00 PM on June 13, 2024. Currently, members of the Trust are Jeffrey Schoonover, John Cabral, Andrew O'Leary, Jennifer Prendergast, and David Heimbecker.

#### 3.20 - Updating of the FY 24 Business Plan/Budget

John Ratcliffe, partner from Pavento, Ratcliffe, Renzi & Co. LLC recently completed the Close for May 2024. Specifics will be shared and distributed during the June 13, 2024, Board of Directors' meeting. He reports that it appears that SCEC's FY 24 business plan/ budget will have ended May 2024 in a positive position; but that due to a reduced number of billing days, there was a \$98,146 loss. It is anticipated that by the end of FY24, SCEC will have earned approximately \$400,000 profit. Enrollments are at budgetary levels and staff levels are minimally lower than planned.

Given all the post-pandemic financial pressures, balancing the FY24 business plan/budget has been difficult. Managing the budgetary complications of student enrollment trends has been challenging for all members of the SCEC educational community, and Leadership Team members have been relentlessly creative and courageous in addressing the challenges. In this vein, SCEC's Senior Leadership Team and Finance Committee will be continuing to take the following steps, which seem to be producing positive results:

- Encouraging all Board Members to support efforts to increase student enrollment and use of other SCEC services
- Exceeding expectations by providing the highest quality programming for all students and their families and staff members in the SCEC catchment area
- Assisting all SCEC leaders in outreach efforts
- Restructuring programs and repurposing staff and other resources

- Collaborating with other educational collaboratives and service entities
- Considering mid-course adjustments in fee structures
- Pursuing grants and other funding sources

### 3.30 – FY25 Business Plan/Budget

Post-pandemic-driven uncertainty is complicating an already difficult budget construction at SCEC. Currently, the Business Plan/Budget model being considered reflects 5% increases in tuition and other fees for services. All possible avenues are being considered and explored to reduce the potential increases, but as indicated major challenges exist. As always predicting student enrollment, the level of student challenges, acquiring suitable public-school classrooms, and medical insurance costs are the most significant factors. Unfortunately, recruiting and retaining high quality staff and space issues are becoming increasingly difficult, and these issues are limiting program development efforts.

However, since the LIFE Academy building and property were purchased by SCEC from the YMCA in Swansea on December 7, 2023, programming for 18- to 22-year-old students has a permanent home. In fact, there may be space made available at that site for additional programming.

The three summary pages of our proposed budget/business plan are included with this board backup. These pages are updated versions of the pages that Board Members traditionally receive. The information will be discussed during our June 13<sup>th</sup> Board of Directors' meeting, and a vote to approve would be appreciated.

### 3.40 – New 3-Year Union Contracts

A new 3-year union contract was ratified on a 78 to 12 vote by SCEC's union members on June 10, 2024. The MOA that was used by union leaders to obtain the positive vote is included in this board backup. It will be discussed during our June 13<sup>th</sup> Board of Directors' meeting, and a vote to ratify by the Board would be appreciated.

### 3.50 - Updating the Status of SCEC's 2024 Annual Audit:

Auditors have collected all the information and files they need and have begun to perform the 2024 Annual Audit. They report that all the information they require is in an acceptable order and that it has been made accessible to them.

### 3.60 - SCEC Financial and Control Policies

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

Note: Monthly Report (MR – 6) for May 2024 is included in this Board Backup

4.00 - Human Resources:

4.10 - New Hires:

4.11 – Amelia O’Brien, ABA Paraprofessional, 12 Months

4.12 – Deb Laurent, Clinician, 12 Months

4.13 – Shane Vezina, Buildings Manager, 12 months

4.14 – Ashley Botelho, Nurse, 12 Months

4.20 - Transfers: None

4.30 - Resignation(s):

4.31 – Diana Rego, RBT Paraprofessional, 12 Months

4.32 – Jessica Henriques, Nurse, 12 Months

4.40 - Retirement(s):

4.41 – Richard Shannon, Building and Grounds Director, 12 Months

5.00 - Executive Session: None

6.00 - Building Program Update:

6.10 - Repairs and replacements at most SCEC sites are being completed on an as needed basis.

E.g., A new septic system has been installed near the parking lot at LIFE Academy and cleanup activities are in progress, roof repairs are being made at Gallishaw and North Schools, at the Main SCEC Office, repairs to the heating system have been completed, along with electrical work required to support upgraded technology and the first-floor bathroom is being renovated.

6.20 - Minor renovations are being completed in newly acquired program classrooms.

7.00 - Policy and Procedures:

7.10 - As current administrative policies and procedures are refined and new ones emerge, Board participation and oversight will be encouraged and solicited.

8.00 - Internal & External Professional Development:

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

8.11 - The members of the SCEC Deep Learning Leadership Team (DLLT) met on June 4<sup>th</sup>.

The primary focus of the meeting was a year-end review of the DL work completed at all Collaborative sites. Team members were asked to report on the steps they had taken throughout the year to promote DL and to address the established goal of using questioning to promote DL with their students. Additionally, team members were asked to provide any artifacts collected to be added to the SCEC DL Hub.

8.12 - On May 3, 2024, all SCEC employees participated in our final online training for the new Massachusetts DESE IEP. The continued focus of the training was Accommodations and Modifications in the New Massachusetts IEP. 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.

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

8.21 - The SCEC/BSU Master's in special education cohort –The anticipated graduation date for this cohort 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 ParaGrant and Student loans. There is a rolling admissions process. Potential candidates should contact Dr. McKearney if interested.

8.23 SCEC currently has two staff members that were accepted into the BSU Emergency Licensure in Moderate PreK-8 & 5-12 DESE Project. Projected graduation is Fall 2025.

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. Response numbers were lower than hoped. Another recruitment push will take place in Fall of 2024.

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. McKearney provided a training on de-escalation and dealing with challenging behaviors at Dartmouth High School on May 8, 2024.

8.27- A CPI Refresher training was conducted for Berkley Public Schools in May 2024. 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](mailto: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 – Executive Director’s Book Review: Sustainability through transforming high conflict into good conflict and focusing on the right stuff:

According to Amanda Ripley in *High conflict: Why we get trapped and how we get out* (2021), good conflict is a necessary force that pushes us to be better people. However, high conflict is seen by her as being counterproductive, because it turns disagreements into an us vs. them battle in which participants often become what they hate. (Amazon, April 5, 2022)

Ripley believes that we can turn unproductive high conflict into productive endeavors by reframing disagreements from battles to be won or lost into opportunities to understand. Active listening and communicating what has been heard are seen as being essential to the transformation. In this sense, progress is seen as understanding and accepting, but not necessarily as agreeing. Once understanding and acceptance are established, common goals can be established and pursued.

Recently, Jim VandeHei one of the authors of *Smart brevity* wrote a book about the secrets to success. The book is entitled *Just the good stuff* (2024) and in it VandeHei models the writing style (less is more) that he and his co-authors espoused. On pages 87-89, he maintains that to be a worthy leader, the following are indispensable:

- A moral framework
- A probing mind
- Courage
- Relentlessness
- Candor
- Grit
- Agility

As leaders striving for access and equity for all in an environment where conflict can be a constant, forging transformative roadmaps seems essential. In doing so, it is becoming increasingly clear that we need to create an inclusive culture that encourages good conflict. Being worthy leaders, active listening and reflective communication can assist us as we deeply and profoundly understand and accept each other. This reinforces and enhances an organizational foundation upon which all members of our educational community will grow and prosper.

Please note that there is a growing body of neuroscience research studies revealing the health benefits of reading fiction. In that vein and as a gesture to our collective DEIB efforts, James McBride’s *The heaven & earth grocery store* (2023) is being offered for Board members’ summer reading.

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

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

9.40 - Updating the Status of SCEC's 2024 Annual Report:

Dr. Bethany DeNardo, Teacher-Leader Linda Cullen and their team are currently compiling information that will be needed to complete the 2024 Annual Report.

10.0 - Other Superintendent Issue(s):

10.10 - Schedule of Remaining SCEC Board of Board Directors Meetings for 2023-2024:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Meeting Description</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
June 13, 2024	OPEB Trust Meeting	12:30 – 1:00 PM	-LIFE Academy
June 13, 2024	-Board of Directors' Meeting	1:00 – 2:00 PM	-LIFE Academy
June 13, 2024	-Board of Directors' Celebration:	2:00 – 3:00 PM	-LIFE Academy
	• Maria Ponte's Retirement		-LIFE Academy
	• John Robidoux's Becoming Marblehead's Superintendent		-LIFE Academy

10.20 - 2024 M.A.S.S. Paul J. Andrews Summer Executive Institute

According to Leah Thibault, she has made registration and accommodations for all Board members who have expressed interest in attending the 2024 M.A.S.S. Summer Institute. Any inquiries regarding the Institute should be directed to her at (508) 379-1180, extension 129 or [lthibault@scecoll.org](mailto:lthibault@scecoll.org).

Please remember that there will be two SCEC dinners available during the Institute to all Board members and guests on:

- Tuesday, July 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM in Sea Crest's Ballroom 1 following the M.A.S.S. cocktail party
- Wednesday, July 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM in La Casa Cucina Sul Mare, 237 Main Street, Falmouth, MA

Interested parties should inform David Heimbecker at (508) 726-8695 by text and/or voicemail.

11.00 - Warrants: To be signed via DocuSign

12.00 - Other Item(s):

12.10 - Updating and Discussing Leasing Property for Instructional Purposes (Agenda Placeholder):

Space to operate SCEC programs continues to be a serious concern for the SCEC Leadership team. Both lease extensions and acquiring new ones are being pursued. Fortunately, space for inclusion programs at the middle and high school levels is opening for the 2024-2025 school year and beyond.

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

12.12 – Although the 1-year lease ends on June 30, 2024 for the BCHS program in Fall River, a 3-year lease has been executed for 5 SCEC inclusion classrooms at Dighton Rehoboth Regional High School. SCEC’s middle school inclusion program will be moving to Beckwith Middle School in Rehoboth with a 3-year lease for 3 inclusion classrooms being executed effective July 1, 2024.

Given the Berkley, Dighton Rehoboth, and Seekonk school departments’ partnerships, SCEC’s Leadership Team is pleased to be able to maintain inclusion programs serving the entire Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade span. LT members are grateful to the SCEC Board members who have made K-12 grade inclusion programming available in the past and future.

12.13 – It is reported that Lease renewals for the Freetown Elementary School and the George R. Austin Intermediate School in Lakeville will be executed within the next few weeks.

12.14 – As previously mentioned, on December 7, 2023, the LIFE Academy building and property were purchased by SCEC from the YMCA in Swansea. As Board Members know all too well, this purchase is the culmination of 7 arduous years of networking, planning, investing, and program development. SCEC’s Leadership Team is grateful to the SCEC Board of Directors for strong and consistent support for this entire project.

The SCEC Leadership Team is planning a ribbon cutting ceremony for some time after the new septic system at LIFE Academy is operational. As mentioned in Agenda item 6.10, construction is nearing completion on the septic system. Board Members are encouraged to share their suggestions for the ceremony. In the meantime, all June 13, 2024 SCEC Board of Directors’ activities will occur at LIFE Academy.

13.00 - Adjournment: