

SOUTH COAST EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE

Board of Directors  
September 12, 2024

AGENDA

- 1.0 - Call to Order
- 2.0 - Minutes of June 13, 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

September 12, 2024, at 1:00 PM

### **BACKUP**

1.00 - Call to Order:

2.00 - Minutes of June 13, 2024:

The minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting held on June 13, 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 September 12, 2024, at 12:30 PM to consider future funding initiatives, policies, structural considerations, and retiree benefits. If there is an OPEB Trust Meeting, the results of the meeting will be shared with the Board of Directors during the Board meeting scheduled to begin at 1:00 PM on October 24, 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 June 2024. Specifics will be shared during the September 12, 2024, Board of Directors' meeting. He reports that it appears that SCEC's FY 24 business plan/ budget has ended June 2024 in a positive position. Overall, programs show a surplus of approximately \$579,948 to a deficit the prior year at this time of \$638,838. Student enrollment and staffing costs are driving the difference. While enrollment was 3 students below budget, staff levels were 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

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.

### 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, and it was ratified by the SCEC Board of Directors on June 13, 2024.

SCEC Union and Leadership Team members believe that the new contract has the potential to transform the manner in which SCEC educational community members work together while increasing opportunities for growth and development of all members, especially students and their families and staff members. Successful deployment of individual staff members on a daily basis will be a critically important factor.

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

Auditor 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 June 2024 is included in this Board Backup.

4.00 - Human Resources – Prepared by Sheena Martin:

4.10 - New Hires:

- 4.11 – Emily Capar, Teacher @ Palmer River, 12 Months
- 4.12 – Dante Parrilla, Para II @ GHS, 12 Months
- 4.13 – Rachelle Todd, Para II @ North, 12 months
- 4.14 – Trisha Therrien, Para II @ SHINE, 12 Months

4.20 - Transfers:

- 4.21 – John Machado, Para II @ SHINE to Para II @ Life Academy, 12 Months
- 4.22 – Joe Generazzo, Para III @ North to Para III @ Life Academy, 12 Months
- 4.23 – Susan Hicks, Paraprofessional @ PR to ABA Para II, 12 Months
- 4.24 – Dan Cormier, Paraprofessional II @ GHS to Para III @ North, 12 Months

4.30 - Resignation(s):

- 4.31 – Emily Capar, Teacher @ Palmer River, 12 Months
- 4.32 – Roger Fournier, Paraprofessional @ Life, 12 Months

4.40 - Retirement(s):

- 4.41 – Bethany Denardo, Administrator, 12 Months
- 4.42 – Susan Pimenta, Paraprofessional III @ SHINE, 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., Renovations to create new program space are ongoing at Berkley Community School, Berkley Middle School, Beckwith Middle School, Dighton Rehoboth Regional High School and at the Main SCEC Office, the second-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 - SCEC has formed a partnership with Dr. Stuart Ablon and his team at Massachusetts General Hospital to bring Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) /Think: Kids to SCEC. CPS/Think: Kids is an evidence-based, trauma-informed practice that reduces challenging behavior, teaches students the skills they lack, and builds relationships with adults. CPS fits in beautifully with our practice of Deeper Learning as it incorporates student voice and building community, and it is trauma informed. All SCEC staff participated in an introductory training on July 24<sup>th</sup>. SCEC Gallishaw High School and SCEC Seekonk North K-8 have been selected to implement the work in the 25/25 school year with all SCEC sites to follow.

8.12 - On September 3, 2024, the first full professional learning day of the 24/25 school year was held. The robust agenda included several DESE-mandated topics including, annual Crisis Prevention Institute

(CPI) refresher training, SCEC Policies and Procedures, Safe Schools Plan, Mandated Reporter Training, and the Annual Legal Topics updates.

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

8.21 - The SCEC/BSU Master's in special education cohort –Most cohort members are entering their final semester. Cohort enrollments consist of 4 SCEC, 2 Somerset/Berkley staff members, and 1 Seekonk Public Schools part time member.

8.22 - In collaboration with BSU, SCEC recruited 2 additional candidates for the Bachelor's degree in special education program in the past few months. 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 participating in 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. Recruitment will take place in Fall of 2024.

8.25- SCEC is exploring a possible partnership with UMASS Dartmouth for a Doctorate in Educational Leadership cohort.

8.26 - Dr. Carolyn McKearney is providing consultation to Avon, Dartmouth, Fall River, Seekonk, and Norwood in the 2024-2025 school year.

8.27 – Dr. McKearney and Donna Cranshaw-Gabriel presented at the Teacher's Institute for Fall River Public Schools in August 2024.

8.28- Dr. McKearney presented at the Swansea Public Schools professional development days in August 2024

8.29- CPI Refresher trainings were conducted for Swansea Public Schools and Freetown/Lakeville Regional School District in August 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).

8.30 - 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](mailto:bdenardo@scecoll.org) or call/text at (508) 962-6521.

#### 9.00 - Superintendent Issues:

9.10 – Executive Director's Book Review: Given the recent Boston Globe articles on the use of "seclusion" in Massachusetts schools, collaboratives and other venues, the Executive

Director's Book Review from the 6/13/24 Board Backup are being repeated: *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.*

9.11 - Updates of SCEC's response to the Boston Globe articles on "secluding" and DESE representatives' onsite visitation at SCEC's program at the Freetown Elementary School on 9/12/24 will be provided during the 9/12/24 Board of Directors' meeting by Associate Executive Director Lisa Martiesian.

9.20 – As a result of the efforts of a SCEC team lead by Lisa Martiesian, DESE funds are being utilized to institute Collaborative Problem-Solving strategies and techniques throughout SCEC.

The services of experts from the Think: Kids program at Massachusetts General Hospital's Psychiatric Department are assisting in this venture.

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

9.40 - 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.

9.50 - 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 2024-2025

<u>Date</u> <u>Location</u>	<u>Meeting Description</u>	<u>Time</u>	
September 12, 2024,	Board Luncheon	12:30 - 1:00 PM	GLC - 2
	Board of Directors' Meeting	1:00 - 2:30 PM	GLC - 2
October 24, 2024,	Board Luncheon	12:30 - 1:00 PM	GLC - 2
	Board of Directors' Meeting	1:00 - 2:20 PM	GLC - 2
December 12, 2024,	Award Ceremony	11:30 AM - 1:00 PM	UMASS
	Board of Directors' Meeting	1:00 - 2:30 PM	UMASS
January 9, 2025,	Board Luncheon	12:30 - 1:00 PM	GLC - 2
	Board of Directors' Meeting	1:00 - 2:30 PM	GLC - 2
February 6, 2025,	Board Luncheon	12:30 - 1:00 PM	GLC - 2
	Board of Directors' Meeting	1:00 - 2:30 PM	GLC - 2
April 10, 2025,	Adm Assistant Luncheon	11:30 - 1:00 PM	Rookery
	Board of Directors' Meeting	1:00 - 2:30 PM	Rookery
June 12, 2025,	Board Luncheon	12:30 - 1:00 PM	GLC - 2
	Board of Directors' Meeting	1:00 - 2:30 PM	GLC - 2

10.20 - Board Members Share Professional Learning Experiences gained at the 2024 M.A.S.S. Paul J. Andrews Summer Executive Institute:

10.30 - Continuous Professional Learning Experiences Supported by SCEC for FY25:

10.31 - AASA - March 6 - 8, 2025 in New Orleans



- 10.32 - ASCD – June 29 – July 2, 2025 in San Antonio
- 10.33 - MASS Summer Institute – July 15 – 17, 2025 in North Falmouth

Board Members who are interested in participating in any of these PD experiences should contact Leah Thibault who will assist in obtaining registration and accommodations for all Board Members. She can be reached at (508) 379-1180, extension 129 or [lthibault@scecoll.org](mailto:lthibault@scecoll.org).

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.

Currently all programs have leases covering FY 26.

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 – A 3-year lease has been executed for 5 SCEC inclusion classrooms at Dighton Rehoboth Regional High School, which provides a home for the SHINE program (previously BCHS), and SCEC’s middle school inclusion program has moved to Beckwith Middle School in Rehoboth with a 3-year lease for 3 inclusion classrooms with a lease executed on 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 – 3- year lease renewals for the Freetown Elementary School and the George R. Austin Intermediate School in Lakeville have been executed.

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 in the fall.

13.00 - Adjournment: