

SOUTH COAST EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE (SCEC)

Board of Directors' Meeting September 12, 2024 Minutes

Present: J. Schoonover, M. Ryan, T. Curley, R. Kidwell, S. Holcomb, J. Cabral, J. Saba-Maguire, T. Aubin, A. O'Leary, 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 June 13, 2024

The minutes of June 13, 2024 were presented for review and approved.

Motion, J. Cabral: To approve the minutes of June 13, 2024

Second, R. Kidwell

Vote, All in Favor

Superintendent T. Aubin and Superintendent T. Curley, Abstained

3.00 - Financial Information

3.10 - Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust

Director of Finance, Jennifer Prendergast noted the current OPEB account balance at the end of June is \$258,000 and at the end of August the balance is \$269,000. SCEC's current OPEB liability is \$9.1M.

3.20 – Updating of the FY 24 Business plan/Budget

Director of Finance, Jennifer Prendergast noted the profit for June 2024 is \$119,000. SCEC's FY2024 year-to-date profit is \$782,000.

SCEC is still in the process of hiring additional staff and will continue to monitor the student/staff ratio.

SCEC's fiscal FY24 audit will be completed by the end of September 2024. The auditors would like to present the audit at the October 24, 2024, Board Meeting.

3.30 - FY 25 Business/Plan

Director of Finance, Jennifer Prendergast presented the FY25 Business Plan calls for 207 staff, as of today SCEC currently has 202 staff.

Superintendent, J. Cabral asked if the paraprofessionals were included in the budget? Director of Finance, Jennifer Prendergast confirmed yes, the paras are included in the budget.

Superintendent, J. Schoonover commented, the difference of students from fall to summer is a typical change. Summer typically has less students and the student number will increase in the fall once districts decide what they need.

Superintendent, J. Cabral asked about Capital Stabilization Fund? Director of Finance, Jennifer Prendergast stated SCEC included \$25,000 through the current Business Plan/Budget approval process that can be used in the current year, SCEC would like to see how the financials look after the audit is presented and where SCEC is in December. At that time the board can decide what to do with the surplus money.

3.40 – New 3-Year Union Contracts

A new 3-year contract was ratified on a 78 to 12 vote by SCEC's union members on June 10, 2024.

Executive Director, David Heimbecker issued the Board the new MOA showing the changes that were made and noted that SCEC tries to balance the changing culture with balance. He is proud of the SCEC team and the Union President for their work with negotiations and appreciates the Boards support.

Executive Director, David Heimbecker wanted to mention a new (NON-UNION) position opening for SCEC staff. This new position will be the go-to person to re-assign staff to programs that have absent staff and need support. This person will be record keeping absenteeism and re-assignment of staff daily.

3.50 – Updating the Status of SCEC's 2024 Annual Audit

Auditors have begun collecting the information and files they need to start work on 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.

4.00 - Human Resources:

4.10 - New Hire(s):

- 4.11 – Emily Capar, Teacher - Palmer River Elem, 12 months
- 4.12 – Dante Parrilla, Para II – Gallishaw High School, 12 months
- 4.13 – Rachelle Todd, Para II – Seekonk North, 12 months
- 4.14 – Trisha Therrien, Para II – SHINE Academy, 12 months

4.20 - Transfer(s):

- 4.21 – John Machado, Para II – From SHINE to LIFE, 12 months
- 4.22 – Joe Generazzo, Para III – From North to LIFE, 12 months
- 4.23 – Susan Hicks, Para – Palmer River to ABA, 12 months
- 4.24 – Dan Cormier, Para 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, Para – LIFE, 12 months

Motion: T. Aubin: To approve the New Hires, Transfers and Resignations as presented.

Second, J. Cabral
Vote, All in Favor

4.40 – Retirement(s):

- 4.41 – Bethany DeNardo, Administrator, 12 months
- 4.42 – Susan Pimenta, Para III at LIFE, 12 months

4.50 – Leave of Absence(s): None

4.60 – Termination(s): None

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 renovation is complete.

Executive Director, David Heimbecker introduced Shane Vezina and stated staff will need to report any updates that are needed to their supervisor who will then report those findings to Dr. Heimbecker for approval.

6.20 - Minor renovations are being completed in newly acquired program classrooms. Smartboards are being installed at D/R High School, and renovations should be complete by next week.

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 – Prepared by Dr. Carolyn McKearney & Frank Gallishaw.

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 introductory training on July 24th. 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 – January 2024 started this SCEC's cohorts fifth semester. The anticipated graduation date is Fall 2024. Cohort enrollments consist 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 – 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. Memos were sent via email to the SCEC Board Members in January 2024. Please consider distributing them throughout your district.

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.

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 2024-2025 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: 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 - Associate Director, Lisa Martiesian discussed the article from the Boston Globe. The Department of Education visited the referenced site and concluded SCEC was in fact compliant.

9.20 - Associate Director, Lisa Martiesian was introduced to discuss the grant opportunity given to us by The Department of Education.

Think Kids is a program at Massachusetts General Hospital that offers grants and other resources to help improve how society understands and treats children with challenging behaviors. Implementing strategies to reduce or eliminate the use of Time-Out rooms.

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.

10.00 - Other Superintendent Issues

10.10 – Schedule of Remaining SCEC Board of Board Directors Meetings for 2024-2025

<u>Date</u>	<u>Meeting Description</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
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 Experienced gained at the 2024 M.A.S.S. Paul J. Andrews Summer Executive Institute.

10.30 – Executive Director, David Heimbecker noted there will be continuous Professional Learning Experienced Supported by SCEC for FY25.

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

10.32 – ASCD, June 29-July2, 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 Experienced 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

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 (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 12th 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.

12.20 – Superintendent, John Cabral spoke about the Francis W. Gallishaw Memorial Award, previously Taunton has recognized two of their High Schools, and their top student(s). Taunton has now added a third high school named Taunton Public Virtual Academy and their principal is Elizabeth Rodriques. This virtual High School setting is honoring the fact that technology is the future. Superintendent Cabral has asked the Board to recognize their new school as part of the Francis Gallishaw Award Scholarship.

Motion: A. O'Leary to add Taunton Public Virtual Academy to the Francis W. Gallishaw Memorial Award Scholarship.

Second, T. Curley
Vote, All in Favor

13.00 - Adjournment

Motion, T. Aubin: Motion to adjourn at 2:23PM
Second, J. Cabral
Vote, Unanimous