

SOUTH COAST EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE (SCEC)

Board of Directors' Meeting October 24, 2024 Minutes

Present: A. O'Leary, J. Saba-Maguire, T. Curley, J. Schoonover, S. Holcomb, B. Runey, T. Aubin, D. Heimbecker, J. Bouchard Prendergast, L. Thibault

1.00 - Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Superintendent J. Schoonover at 1:00 PM.

2.00 - Minutes of September 12, 2024

The minutes of September 12, 2024 were presented for review and approved.

Motion, T. Aubin: To approve the minutes of September 12, 2024
Second, S. Holcomb
Vote, All in Favor

3.00 - Financial Information

3.10 - Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust

Director of Finance, Jennifer Bouchard Prendergast noted the current OPEB account balance at the end of September is \$272,000. As of October 1, the Capital Reserve balance is \$118,000. SCEC's current OPEB liability is \$9.1M.

3.20 – Updating of the FY 25 Business plan/Budget

Director of Finance, Jennifer Bouchard Prendergast noted SCEC had a loss for September of \$65,000, with a loss for the year of \$18,000. SCEC started the year with 204 students, in September SCEC had increased to 212 students and by the date of the meeting SCEC is up another 4 students. This number is still down 9 students from the original business plan.

SCEC is still in the process of hiring additional staff and will continue to monitor the student/staff ratio. In September SCEC had 206 staff which is down one staff from the Business Plan. As of October 24th, SCEC has 22 individual aides and with the student population currently attending SCEC a private nurse may be needed. SCEC Sr. Leaders with Executive Director, David Heimbecker will work with the appropriate insurance companies and lawyers to fit the needs of SCEC students.

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.

SCEC had to change the Related Services software billing, within a short three-month period. Related Service staff like the new software, however the reporting features don't work for SCEC. Director of Finance, Jennifer Bouchard Prendergast is working with the software company to rectify this issue, however the cost is high, and SCEC isn't sure we can get what is needed.

3.30 – 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, and 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 way 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 daily will be a critically important factor.

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

Auditors from Marcum, LLP, Partner, Renee Davis and Manager, Laura Stone presented the 2023-2024 SCEC Annual Financial Audit. They handed out the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended June 30, 2024, to the SCEC Board of Directors. They reviewed the audit with the board and stated a "Clean Opinion" and "No adjustments are necessary". Laura Stone thanked Director of Finance, Jennifer Bouchard Prendergast for her thorough work and help to complete the audit two months earlier this year than prior years.

3.50 – Annual Financial Audit and Cumulative Surplus as of June 30, 2024 vote:

Motion: B. Runey, "Approve the 2023-2024 Annual Financial Audit of South Coast Educational Collaborative as presented and submitted by Renee Davis, Partner and Laura Stone, Manager from Marcum, LLP and instruct the Board Chair and the Executive Director to certify that this action was taken by signing a document that memorializes the action taken."

Second, S. Holcomb
Vote, All in Favor

Motion: T. Aubin, “To designate \$5,882,602 as South Coast Educational Collaborative’s Cumulative surplus for FY24 and retain for the Collaborative’s use.”

Second, B. Runey
Vote, All in Favor

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 – Erin Hetherton, Teacher- Palmer River, 12 months
- 4.12 – Nicole Hemmer, Vision Teacher, 10 months

4.20 - Transfer(s):

- 4.21 – Aimee Caminiti, Teacher- North to GHS, 12 months
- 4.22 – Chantal Freitas, Para II- GHS to Float Para II GHS/Seekonk HS

4.30 - Resignation(s): None

Motion: S. Holcomb: To approve the New Hires, Transfers and Resignations as presented.

Second, B. Runey
Vote, All in Favor

4.40 – Retirement(s):

- 4.41 – Patricia Collier, School Lunch Para/LIFE Academy

Motion: B. Runey: To approve the retirement as presented.

Second, S. Holcomb
Vote, All in Favor

4.50 – Leave of Absence(s):

4.51 – Susan Abbott, PT 10 months-Personal Leave (January-June)

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. 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 heating system at North school in Seekonk requires a new regulator, and a replacement oven needs to be acquired at the Gallishaw school in Seekonk.

6.20 - Minor renovations have been 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 – Prepared by Dr. Carolyn McKearney & Frank Gallishaw.

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

8.11 - SCEC employees, Kristen Aylward and Cynthia Generazzo will participate in Train the Trainer training sponsored by the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) this month. MARC is an academic Center at Bridgewater State University. This training will prepare both Kristen and Cynthia to provide our bullying prevention training to SCEC employees scheduled for the month of November.

8.12 - Collaborative-wide training was provided to SCEC staff on October 16th on the recently revised student break logs and classroom time-out logs. Revisions to both logs were made recently, with input from our DESE contact individual. The training generated some rich discussions regarding the subtleties associated with each of the logs.

8.13 – All SCEC staff members are committed to adapting and adopting the new DESE-driven IEP instrument and process throughout SCEC. In this vein, continuous professional programming will be delivered during all scheduled professional development activities throughout the 2024-2025 school year.

8.14 – The SCEC partnership with Dr. Stuart Ablon and his team at Massachusetts General Hospital will be continuing for the next four years. It is bringing Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) /Think: Kids to SCEC. CPS/Think: Kids, which is an evidence-based, trauma-informed practice, 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 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.

8.20 - 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. 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 is providing a two-part “Understanding ASD” series for Norwood Little Mustangs Preschool Academy in October 2024.

8.28 – Dr. McKearney and Donna Cranshaw-Gabriel are conducting a program evaluation for Dighton-Rehoboth’s TLC program at Palmer River Elementary School in October 2024.

8.29 – CPI Refresher trainings were conducted for Berkley Public Schools, Swansea Public Schools, and Freetown/Lakeville Regional School District in September 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 - Sustainability through resetting:

In 2021, as the world was emerging from the COVID pandemic, Johnny C. Taylor, Jr, President & CEO of the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) wrote a book that he felt would assist leaders throughout the world as they were attempting to spring back to a sense of normalcy. He entitled the book ***RESET: A leader’s guide to work in an age of upheaval***. J. C. Taylor, Jr. views the world through the lens of Human Resources. He maintains that dealing with the COVID crisis alerted workers to the critically important work of HR professionals, and that the potent capacity of HR is now realized and appreciated. According to him, leaders are reimagining their organizational cultures as global upheaval becomes prominent. Diversity and inclusion are seen by him as essential to sustaining companies, institutions, and cultures.

The SCEC Executive Director believes that the suggestions in RESET have implications for a wide range of SCEC issues, and he believes that the Taylor, Jr's projecting crisis in a positive light is most timely:

Crisis presents an opportunity to completely reimagine your company culture, and that's more critical now than ever. (2021, p. 75)

The issues revolving around the recent Boston Globe articles, budgetary challenges, staffing shortages and alignment, and the continuing political upheaval in SCEC's catchment area could be seen as contributing to a sustainability crisis. On the other hand, they may all be contributing to massive sustainability opportunities for SCEC. If what we think impacts how we feel, and how we feel dictates how we behave, the possibilities are endless.

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. (See Agenda Item 8.14)

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 been aggressively pursuing DESE resources resulting in new ELA, Mathematics, and Social Studies 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>
December 12, 2024,	Award Ceremony	11:30– 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 throughout the year.

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 – The 3-year lease renewals for Freetown Elementary School and 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.

12.15 – Swansea Superintendent, Scott Holcomb mentioned the Case Jr. High School will be vacant once the new Jr. High School is built, this vacancy could be potential space for SCEC programs.

13.00 - Adjournment

Motion, S. Holcomb: Motion to adjourn at 2:27PM

Second, T. Curley
Vote, Unanimous