

SOUTH COAST EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE (SCEC)

Board of Directors' Meeting January 15, 2026 Minutes

Present: R. Kidwell, T. Curley, B. Runey, F. Roy, J. Schoonover, M. Ryan, S. Holcomb, J. Saba-Maguire, J. Cabral (zoom) D. Heimbecker, J. Bouchard, L. Thibault, L. Cullen

1.00 - Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Superintendent/Chair J. Schoonover at 1:10 PM.

2.00 - Minutes of December 12, 2025

The minutes of December 12, 2025, were presented for review and approved.

Motion, B. Runey: To approve the minutes of December 12, 2025
Second, S. Holcomb

All in favor

3.00 - Financial Information

3.10 - Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust

The OPEB Trustees will be meeting on June 11, 2026, at 12:00PM 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 regular scheduled Board meeting at 1:00 June 11, 2026.

SCEC's current OPEB liability is \$7.3M. SCEC currently has 17 retirees covered under insurance. Superintendent June Saba-Maguire asked what the retirees are offered, Director of Finance, Jennifer Bouchard noted they are eligible for 50% of an individual plan.

3.11 – Approval of the 2024-2025 Annual Financial Audit

Director of Finance, Jennifer Bouchard thanked the Board of Directors for approving the Annual Report, at December's meeting.

3.20 – Updating of the FY2026 Business Plan/Budget

SCEC reports a loss of \$138,000 for the month of December and the collaboratives year-to-date results are a \$83,406 deficit.

SCEC had 206 students at the end of December, with a budget of 215. This student number is low partially due to the 15 students who graduated in June. SCEC will take time to build that number back up.

SCEC ended December with 208 staff, with 205 in the business plan. More subs were hired, but SCEC is still down FTEs. SCEC will continue to monitor the student/staff ratio and hire staff only as needed.

Executive Director, David Heimbecker asked the Board what their thoughts were about student statistics. Superintendent, Melissa Ryan mentioned Berkley pulled stats from 2020 for the new elementary school being built and noted births in 2020 had tripled during covid, projecting a 2026 Kindergarten bubble.

Cash reserves currently cover 2.4 months of expenses; board recommendation is 3 months. Quarterly billing went out for January-March and once payments are received, reserves should meet that.

Motion: M. Ryan: To designate \$6,030,104 as cumulative surplus for FY2025 and retain for the use of the Collaborative.

Second: T. Curley

No discussion
All in Favor

3.50 – FY27 Business Plan/Budget

SCEC's current Business Plan/Budget model being considered reflects a 5% increase in tuition and other service fees. All avenues are being explored to reduce this risk, but challenges exist including student enrollment, specific student challenges and acquiring suitable public-school classrooms are the most significant.

Director of Finance, Jennifer Bouchard will be working with program leaders collecting data to be sure SCEC has the most current information.

4.00 - Human Resources:

4.10 - New Hire(s): None

4.20 – Transfer(s):

4.21 – Belanger, Christan- 12-month Para/Berkley Middle to Gallishaw

4.30 – Resignation(s):

4.31 – Soucy, Nicholas- 12-month Para/Gallishaw HS

4.40 – Retirement(s):

4.41 – Bigelow, Brian- 12-month Teacher/Gallishaw HS

4.42 – Mongeon, Laura- 12-month Reading Teacher/Related Services

4.50 – Leave(s): None

Motion: R. Kidwell: To approve New Hires, Transfers & Resignations as presented.

Second: M. Ryan

All in Favor

6.00 - Building Program Update:

6.10 – Repairs and replacements at most SCEC sites are being completed on an as needed basis. The electrical upgrade project and bathroom remodel at the Main Office are complete. Keeping up with the roof leaks and HVAC issues at North and Gallishaw are ongoing.

6.20 – Keeping our options open to discuss availability at Swansea’s Case Jr. High School.

7.00 - Policy and Procedures:

7.10 – As current administration policies and procedures are refined and new ones emerge, Board participation and oversight will be encouraged.

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 –The SCEC Deeper Learning Leadership Team (DLLT) conducted a meeting on January 6th. The team has continued to maintain our four subcommittee groups that include Information & Professional Development, Data & Information, Teachers, and Clinical. The team has developed a Deeper Learning and Outcome goal form which each SCEC has completed. DLLT facilitator Dave Marr outlined the team’s vision, which focuses on critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity among SCEC educators. The team plans to gather feedback on their proposed support, including observations and training before disseminating information widely.

8.12 - A discussion on student GRIT data also took place at the DLLT meeting.

Summaries have been provided to each SCEC site for Q1 and soon to be for Q2. The team highlighted the importance of evaluating the GRIT measure's usefulness and encouraged SCEC programs to schedule meetings with our Data subcommittee members. Some future considerations include:

- Ongoing support and resources available for programs to implement changes based on GRIT data.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness and usefulness of the GRIT measure.
- Discussion of GRIT data summaries and their implications for program evaluations.
- Strategies for enhancing GRIT among students based on data insights.

8.20- External Professional Development Prepared by Dr. Carolyn McKearney

8.21 - SCEC Senior Fellow, Dr. Carolyn McKearney and Donna Cranshaw-Gabriel, have contracted with Dighton/Rehoboth Regional School district to complete three special education program evaluations in the 2025-2026 school year.

8.22 - In January 2026, the SCEC CPI will be working with 29 staff members from Bristol County Agricultural High School to obtain their Initial CPI certification.

8.23 - Dr. McKearney met with the Freetown/Lakeville administrative team to discuss DESE's upcoming changes to the Restraint & Seclusion regulations that take effect in August 2026.

8.24- 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.

8.25 - Dr. Carolyn McKearney is currently working with Berkley, Dartmouth, Dighton/Rehoboth, and Seekonk for consultation, professional development presentations, and program evaluation in the 2025-2026 school year.

8.26 - 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 2025-2026 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) 922-6213 or cmckearney@scecoll.org.

9.00 - Superintendent Issues

9.10 – The South Coast Educational Collaborative Annual Report 2024-2025, which was approved by SCEC’s Board of Directors, has been submitted to appropriate DESE officials.

Linda Cullen, Co-Leader for Related Services presented an abstract of the document at the January 15, 2026, Board meeting.

Executive Director, David Heimbecker introduced Linda Cullen and noted her years of service.

Linda presented a summary of the 2024-2025 SCEC Annual Report, noting the report was restructured from DESE feedback breaking it down into three objectives:

1. To improve the academic achievement of students with low incidence disabilities in the least restrictive environment.
2. To offer a variety of quality professional development opportunities to general and special education teachers, administrators, and related service providers.
3. To provide all programs and services in a cost effective, value added and sustainable manner.

Linda is open to suggestions in helping to improve the annual report in the future.

9.20 – The South Coast Educational Collaborative Annual Audit, which was approved by SCEC’s Board of Directors, has been submitted to appropriate DESE and MA officials.

9.30 – The Executive Director’s Book Club - Sustainability through rethinking from: Adam Grant (2023). *Think Again: The power of knowing what you don’t know*. Published by Penguin Books Harmony Books in New York City.

Although *Think again* was originally published during the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2021, it was republished in 2023 because the author and his colleagues believed that the strategies contained in the book were important to revisit as the problems of the world continued to multiply after the Pandemic. It appears that not knowing what we don’t know can be dangerous to us and to our friends and colleagues. Fortunately, Adam Grant believes that we can discover what we don’t know and learn what we don’t know by thought partnering together. (p. 8)

In his Action for Impact section at the end of *Think again* (pp. 253-259) Grant admonishes:

- 1 – Think like a scientist
- 2 – Define your identity in terms of values, not opinions
- 3 – Seek out information that goes against your views
- 4 – Beware of getting stranded at the summit of Mount Stupid
- 5 – Harness the benefits of doubt
- 6 – Embrace the joy of being wrong
- 7 – Learn something new from each person you meet
- 8 – Build a challenge network, not just a support network
- 9 – Don't shy away from constructive conflict
- 10 – Practice the art of persuasive listening
- 11 – Question how, rather than why
- 12 – Ask, "What evidence would change your mind?"
- 13 – Ask how people originally formed an opinion
- 14 – Acknowledge common ground
- 15 – Remember that less is often more
- 16 – Reinforce freedom of choice
- 17 – Have a conversation about the conversation
- 18 – Complexify contentious topics
- 19 – Don't shy away from caveats and contingencies
- 20 – Expand your emotional range
- 21 – Have a weekly myth-busting discussion at dinner
- 22 – Invite kids to do multiple drafts and seek feedback from others
- 23 – Stop asking kids what they want to be when they grow up
- 24 – Abandon best practices ... adopt better practices
- 25 – Establish psychological safety
- 26 – Keep a rethinking scorecard
- 27 – Throw out the ten-year plan
- 28 – Rethink your actions, not just your surroundings
- 29 – Schedule a life checkup
- 30 – Make time to think again

The SCEC Executive Director believes that rethinking has the potential to guide educational leaders through the increasingly challenging times that continue to emerge. Being willing to assist each other in learning what we don't know can be exciting and gratifying. On page 7 Adam Grant warns that "rethinking may require admitting failure and shedding part of your identity. You must rethink your goal in your job—and your role in life." But he also maintains that creating a safe environment in which you model and encourage rethinking as a technique for reassessment, reinvention, and creation might lead to transformative sustainability. (pp. 254, 256, & 258)

10.00 - Other Superintendent Issues

10.10 – SCEC Board of Board Directors Meetings for 2025-2026

<u>Date</u>	<u>Meeting Description</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
February 12,2026	Board Luncheon	12:30 – 1:00 PM	GLC 2
	Board of Directors’ Workshop	1:00 – 3:00 PM	GLC 2
April 16,2026	Administrative Luncheon	11:30 – 1:00 PM	GLC 2
	Board of Directors’ Meeting	1:00 – 3:00 PM	GLC 2
June 11,2026	Board Luncheon	12:30 – 1:00 PM	GLC 2
	Board of Directors’ Meeting	1:00 – 3:00 PM	GLC 2

Motion: F. Roy: To entertain the motion to cancel the February 12, 2026, meeting and if items come up a virtual meeting can be scheduled within 48 hours for notification.

Second: R. Kidwell

Superintendent, S. Holcomb: Opposed

The February 12, 2026, SCEC Board of Directors meeting will still be held at the Main Office, 2201 GAR Highway in Swansea at 1:00 with the luncheon beginning at 12:30PM.

*Please remember that all members of SCEC’s Board of Directors are strongly encouraged to attend Board of Directors’ meetings. Since Massachusetts State (MA) laws governing Educational Collaboratives require attendance, officials from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MADESE) are monitoring attendance. DESE officials are required to audit Educational Collaboratives once in a six-year cycle.

10.20 - Continuous Professional Learning Experiences Supported by SCEC for FY26 and beyond*:

10.21 - AASA – February 12-14, 2026, in Nashville, TN

10.22 - ASCD – June 28 – July 1, 2026, in San Antonio

10.23 - MASS Summer Institute – July 13 – 16, 2026 in North Falmouth

*Please remember the long SCEC history of Board Members conferring at PD activities and sharing their professional learning experiences at subsequent Board of Directors’ meetings. Board Members have frequently reported that doing so has proven to be useful in their professional growth and development.

Board Members who are interested in participating in any of these PD experiences should contact Leah Thibault who will assist in obtaining registration and accommodation 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.

13.00 - Adjournment

Motion, S. Holcomb: Motion to adjourn at 2:04 PM
Second, T. Curley

All in favor