

SOUTH COAST EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE (SCEC)

Board of Directors' Meeting

April 16, 2026

Minutes

Present: R. Kidwell, F. Roy, J. Schoonover, M. Ryan, S. Holcomb, J. Cabral,
D. Heimbecker, J. Bouchard, L. Thibault

1.00 - Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Superintendent/Chair J. Schoonover at 2:03 PM.

2.00 - Minutes of January 15, 2026

The minutes of January 15, 2026, were presented for review and approved.

Motion, S. Holcomb: To approve the minutes of January 15, 2026
Second, M. Ryan

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 \$7.1M. SCEC's OPEB balance at the end of March 2026 is \$339,000.

3.20 – Updating of the FY26 Business Plan/Budget

John Ratcliffe, partner from Pavento, Ratcliffe, Renzi & Co recently closed February 2026. At the end of February, the Collaborative's surplus is \$121,527. Our student numbers are increasing, from February with 209 students to April 16th with 212. SCEC's budget is set at 215 students, so we are moving in the right direction. SCEC is budgeted for 205 staff, at the end of March SCEC had 202.

3.50 – FY27 Business Plan/Budget

SCEC's Business Plan will reflect a 5% increase in tuition and a 3% increase in all other services; including related services, clinical services, I: I aides.

Director of Finance, Jennifer Bouchard worked with senior leadership and program leaders, to make sure student needs and programming necessities were included in the FY27 Business Plan.

The FY27 Business Plan includes 214 students and 206 staff. Of those staff 20 are I: I aides. Union staff will move up steps and get a 1.5% salary increase. In FY27, union staff will also work 5 less days going from 217 to 212. The health insurance increase is 7.5%. Direct expenses are budgeted at 87% of the business plan and salaries alone are 63%. The total expenditure is \$25,980,881 for the FY27 Business Plan.

The capital expenditure plan for FY26-27 includes a total estimated cost of \$206,000. SCEC has prioritized heating system controls at North School in Seekonk. Along with security systems at all stand alone locations. And ground/snow removal equipment.

Motion, J. Cabral: To accept & prioritize FY26-27 Capital Expenditure Plan
Second: R. Kidwell

All in Favor

Motion, J. Cabral: To approve the FY27 Business Plan as presented.
Second: S. Holcomb

All in Favor

4.00 - Human Resources:

4.10 - New Hire(s):

4.11 - Burt, Brittany- 12-month Clinician- March 19, 2026

4.20 – Transfer(s): None

4.30 – Resignation(s):

4.31 – Castro, Melissa- 12-month Nurse- April 10, 2026

4.40 – Retirement(s): None

4.50 – Leave(s): None

Motion: J. Cabral: To approve New Hires & Resignations as presented.
Second: M. Ryan

All in Favor

5.00 – Executive Session:

Motion, J. Cabral: To entertain moving to Executive Session
Second, F. Roy

All in Favor

Motion, R. Kidwell: To Adjourn Executive Session at 3:24pm
Second, F. Roy

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. 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. Key SCEC staff members will be touring the building within the next few weeks.

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 – Dr. Marc Hauser hosted an all-SCEC webinar entitled, Grit the Passion + Perseverance Recipe. This webinar emphasized importance of grit in student success, data collection, analyzing student effort variability and using insights to inform differentiated instruction. All SCEC sites collect data on student grit and have recently received generated reports on quarters 1 & 2. Dr. Hauser and SCEC staff member John Murphy have met with many of the SCEC staff members at programs to evaluate this important data. Many programs have set strategic goals for data utilization.

8.12 – On Wednesday, March 18th our early release day we held Collaborative-wide webinar that included two topics. An Informational Human Resource Session was hosted by Mickey Dargon, Director of HR/Payroll. Additionally, we received training/review of Time-Out, Incident Reports (IRO), Restraints and Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) practices conducted by members of our CPI/CPR team.

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- On March 17, 2026, Dr. Carolyn McKearney led a training titled “Understanding ASD- Part 2” for the Dighton/Rehoboth Regional School District professional day.

8.23 – On March 19, 2026, 25 staff members from Seekonk Public Schools worked with SCEC CPI team members to complete their CPI Refresher certification.

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- On April 3, 2026, Dr. Carolyn McKearney led a training titled “De-escalation and Behavior Management Review” for the Berkley Public School District paraprofessionals on their professional day.

8.26- Recruitment for a master’s degree in special education cohort with Bridgewater State University began in February 2026. Currently, 10 candidates have expressed interest. A Master’s cohort will take place in September 2026. Contact Dr. Carolyn McKearney at (508) 922-6213 or cmckearney@scecoll.org. if you have interest/questions/concerns.

8.27 - 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.

8.28 - 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 2025-2026 school year.

Examples of available support 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 DR and Swansea SEPACs teamed up and had a Family Recourse Fair at LIFE Academy in Swansea. It was held on Sunday, April 12, 2026, from 11 AM to 3 PM, and was reported to have been a success.

9.20 – The Executive Director’s Book Club

Sustainability through disagreeing better:

Julia Minson, *How to Disagree Better*, (Avery,2026). In this book, Julia Minson does not attempt to give advice on winning an argument. She provides scientifically proven strategies for disagreeing civilly in constructive conversations. Minson suggests that instead of attempting to convince others who do not hold our views to change their minds by providing our truths, it is more productive to explore how they came to their conclusions. Throughout the book, Julia Minson maintains that speaking with a receptive tone can lead to deep and meaningful understanding of differences. She provides tools that often lead to creating a culture of receptiveness in which disagreements lead to stronger, more civil relationships and increased levels of productivity.

Executive Director David Heimbecker suggests reading *How to Disagree Better*, obtaining a receptiveness to opposing views score by taking the receptiveness survey and applying the suggestions and using the tools provided in the book. The survey can be found at disagreeingbetter.com/survey. He believes that the quality of your personal and professional lives could improve dramatically.

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>
June 11,2026	Commissioner Webinar/Luncheon	12:00 -1:00PM	GLC 2
	Board of Directors’ Meeting	1:00 – 3:00 PM	GLC 2

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

10.22 - 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.

12.00 - Other Item(s):

12.10 - Updating and Discussing Leasing Property for Instructional Purposes

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.

12.11 - Leases for venues providing inclusive programs have been extended at the Berkley Community* and Middle Schools in Berkley, Palmer River Elementary School in Rehoboth, the Beckwith Middle School in Rehoboth, the Dighton Rehoboth Regional High School in Dighton, the Freetown Elementary, George R. Austin Intermediate School in Lakeville, and a classroom in Seekonk High School.

*It should be noted that SCEC staff members are currently teaming up with colleagues from the Berkley School Department as they plan for a new elementary school in which 2 classrooms will be dedicated for use by SCEC. Everyone involved seems to be excited by the prospects.

12.12 - Leases for school buildings to house substantially separate programs at North School (grades 1-8) and Gallishaw High School in Seekonk continue discussion regarding extension of the leases.

12.13 – Future arrangements for the use of Case Junior High School in Swansea are currently being explored. A previously mentioned, tour of the building was arranged, and participants were optimistic about the possibilities for 2029 and beyond.

12.14 – LIFE Academy is now owned by SCEC and home to a program serving 18–22-year-old adults. It now serves as a training site for transitional programming and a wide range of SCEC and other educationally related entities.

12.15 – Midyear assessments have been conducted of all leased buildings and classrooms regarding compliance and programming impacts during FY26. It appears that leasing requirements are being successfully addressed by both the lessors (Districts) and lessees (SCEC) and programming continues to expand and grow.

12.16 – A document including floor plans of leased spaces was included with the last Board Backup. This document is available upon request. Director of Finance Jennifer Bouchard can provide it with Dimensions, square footage, and rent being paid are included. The document was produced by SCEC's Director of Finance, Jennifer Bouchard and Director of Building and Grounds, Shane Vezina.

13.00 - Adjournment

Motion, R. Kidwell: Motion to adjourn at 3:27 PM

Second, F. Roy

All in favor