

SOUTH COAST EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE (SCEC)

Board of Directors' Meeting

September 17, 2026

Minutes

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

1.00 - Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Superintendent/Chair J. Schoonover at 1:02 PM.

2.00 - Minutes of June 11, 2026

The minutes of June 11, 2026, were presented for review and approved.

Motion, J. Cabral: To approve the minutes of June 11, 2026
Second, B. Starkie

All in favor

3.00 - Financial Information

3.10 - Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust

SCEC's current OPEB liability is up from \$7,335,329 to \$8,276,548. SCEC's OPEB balance at the end of June 2026 was \$369K and at the end of August 2026 the balance is \$387K.

Director of Finance, Jennifer Bouchard confirmed from June's meeting that Rockland Trust has agreed to present to SCEC's Board of Directors and will be scheduled for January 14, 2027, at the Main Office, 2201 GAR Highway, Swansea MA.

3.20 – Updating of the FY26 Business Plan/Budget

John Ratcliffe, partner from Pavento, Ratcliffe, Renzi & Co recently completed the June 2026 financials. At the end of June, SCEC's loss is \$71,000. SCEC had been projecting a loss of about \$200K for the year but ended with a loss of \$182K.

SCEC budgeted for FY26, 215 students and 206 staff, SCEC ended the year with 204 students and 206 staff.

Superintendent J. Cabral asked for an explanation as to why the elementary programs had such a big loss? Director of Finance Jennifer Bouchard explained that this is partly because elementary students have bigger needs, higher costs. The high school programs can share services/ cost because they are bigger programs and share building space whereas the elementary programs are spread throughout different school locations which makes job sharing and servicing needs more difficult.

Superintendent John Cabral would like to see an analysis run: Elementary tuition vs High School tuition, member vs nonmembers and asked how much tuition would be, so each program broke even?

Executive Director David Heimbecker mentioned we can look at increasing the elementary tuition, but to lower the High School tuition is just not realistic.

Motion, J. Cabral: To do a cost analysis on tuition rates to help with the \$500,000 gap.

Second, S. Holcomb

All in Favor

3.50 – FY27 Business Plan/Budget

Superintendent Jeffrey Schoonover asked what the FY25-26 and FY26-27 student numbers are budgeted for.

2026 budgeted 215

2027 budgeted 214

Currently there are 195 students

Full-Time Employees (FTE) are budgeted for 197.7 for FY27.

Executive Director, David Heimbecker noted: This is the second year that we are taking away 5 working days from the Union Contract, crunching numbers we never have before.

3.60 – SCEC Financial and Control Policies

As existing policies are homes 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 - Lynette MacNeil-Director of Payroll and Human Resource, Start date 8/10/2026
- 4.12 - Shannon Johnson - 12-month Teacher-Gallishaw, Start date 8/10/2026
- 4.13 - Brenda Leduc - 12-month Para II-Gallishaw, Start date 8/17/2026
- 4.14 - Jenna Gifford - 12-month Reading Specialist, Start date 9/8/2026
- 4.15 - Jaime Hernandez - 12-month School Nurse, start date 9/8/2026
- 4.16 - Sarah Coucci -10-month (.80) Physical Therapist Related Services, Start date 9/8/2026

4.20 – Transfer(s):

- 4.21 - Laurie Thorton - teacher to para
- 4.22 - Gavin Jenkins - substitute for 12-month Para II-Gallishaw
- 4.23 - Kristin Alyward - Clinical to Teacher/Leader Clinician position
- 4.24 - Victoria Mello - move to Full Time Nurse
- 4.25 - Cristen Henderson - School Psychologist role expanded to include CPS Administrative Liaison

4.30 – Resignation(s):

- 4.31 - Dante Parilla 12-month Para II Gallishaw
- 4.32 - Brendan Foley -12-month Vision Teacher Related Services
- 4.33 - Samantha Walkden Para II Freetown Elementary
- 4.34 - Jessica Raposo - Para II Life
- 4.35 - Ashley Botelho - 12- month School Nurse
- 4.36 - Kiley Hall- 10-month Occupational Therapist Related Services
- 4.37 - Evan Pacheco - 12- month- Para II Gallishaw
- 4.38 - Kathy Benoit - Marr- 12-month teacher Freetown Elementary School

4.40 – Retirement(s):

- 4.41 - Laura Mongeon

4.50 – Leave(s):

- 4.51 - Teresa Mederios - Admin. leave
- 4.52 - John Machado - medical leave
- 4.53 - Rachel Desrosiers - maternity leave
- 4.54 - Katrina Fitzgerald - medical leave
- 4.55 - Diane Martini - family medical leave
- 4.56 - Kathleen McGough-Staley - family medical leave

Motion, J. Cabral: To approve New Hires, Transfers, Resignations as presented and for the board to send Laura Mongeon a thank you letter to for her time here at SCEC.

Second, F. Roy

All in favor

Executive Director David Heimbecker asked the Board to look over his Opening Day presentation and to focus on page 6 “Who are we?”, page 19 “How do we do it?” and page 20 “SCEC Committee’s”.

For the small size of SCEC it takes many people and many moving parts to make it run successfully.

5.00 – Executive Session:

5.10 – Executive Session was moved to the end of the meeting

6.00 - Building Program Update:

6.10 – Repairs and replacements at most SCEC sites are being completed on an as needed basis. Updating lighting to LED units, weather-related tasks such as snow removal and leaking roofs are ongoing.

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.

7.20 – SCEC’s Associate Executive Director, Lisa Martiesian presented our new Policies and Procedures Manual. Lisa opened by saying Cathy Vieira-Baker and herself work on this every year and made some great updates. As well as a new cover.

The table of contents was re-organized to create an easier flow of finding what you need.

This year they highlighted digital resources, that we need to be more vigilant on what our students & staff are utilizing for online resources.

Revamped the substance abuse, civil rights and non-discrimination policy.

Safe Schools have been added instead of having their own document.

The Protect act was put into play after this document was printed, however all staff will receive a copy, and it will be added to this document.

SCEC's Policies and Procedures Manual is available on our website under governance.

Motion, J. Cabral: Approve SCEC's Policy and Procedures manual as presented pending legal counsel review of the Protect Act Policy.

Second, S. Holcomb

All in Favor

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 continuous professional learning provided all SCEC staff members at the Reopening Days, September 8 and 9, 2026 was highly productive.

On September 8, 2026 all SCEC staff received presentations regarding:

- Special Education Legal Matters
- Collaborative Problem Solving
- Curriculum Initiatives
- SCEC Policies and Procedures
- Annual renewal of Crisis Prevention and Interventions – Part I
- SCEC staffs also attended a Google Suite Tools session.

On September 9, 2026 all SCEC staff:

- Concluded their training in Crisis Prevention – Part II
- Collaborated with colleagues and their respective leaders regarding the 2026-2027 School Year

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

8.21 – September concludes the grant that Dr. McKearney has been collaborating with Dighton Rehoboth's special education director Dr. Juanita Digioia on. On September 9, 2026, Dr. McKearney met with Beckwith Middle staff to discuss implementation strategies.

8.22- On August 31, 2026, 54 staff members from Swansea Public schools worked with the SCEC CPI team members to complete their CPI Refresher training.

8.23- On September 1, 2026, 44 staff members from the Freetown/Lakeville Regional School District worked with SCEC CPI team members to complete their CPI Refresher training.

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. McKearney presented to the Berkely Public Schools Surround Care staff on "De-escalation and Creating Therapeutic Environments" on September 2, 2026.

8.26- The Bridgewater State University (BSU)/ MOEC Masters in Special Education cohort begins in September 2026. 1 Seekonk Public Schools staff member, and 4 SCEC staff members have joined the cohort.

8.27 - Dr. Carolyn McKearney is currently working with Berkley, Dartmouth, Dighton/Rehoboth, Freetown/Lakeville and Seekonk for consultation, and professional development in the 2026-2027 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 2026-2027 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 regarding EL students who also require special education services.
- Communicating with and supporting families

Contact Dr. Bethany DeNardo if interested in this service bdenardo@scecoll.org.

Executive Director David Heimbecker mentioned that Our Sr. Fellows head our Professional Development and that SCEC is deeply involved with PD, these ½ days are outlined in our contract.

9.00 - Superintendent Issues:

9.10 – The Executive Director’s Book Club

Executive Director David Heimbecker spoke briefly about Michael Fullen, second edition book (2026) *The six secrets of change 2.0: What the best leaders do to help their organization survive and thrive*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Dr. Heimbecker suggests reading over Fullen’s bullet points.

- Start with purpose, not technology. Use AI to advance a shared moral and organizational purpose—such as improving learning, service, or equity—rather deploying it because it is fashionable.
- Keep human judgment in charge> Treat AI output as provisional: question its assumptions, check for errors and bias, and do not outsource consequential decisions to it.
- Build collective capacity. Enable people across the organization to learn, experiment, share effective practice, and develop the confidence to use AI responsibly, not just leave expertise with a technical elite.
- Make learning continuous. Use AI as one input into cycles of inquiry, reflection, adaptation, and improvement. In Fullan’s framework, “systems learn” when learning and leadership are distributed throughout the system, rather than concentrated at the top.
- Use transparency and collaboration. Make the purpose, evidence, limitations, and effects of AI use visible, so peers can evaluate it together and improve practice.

9.20 – Revisiting SCEC’s Strategic Plan for 2023-2028

As the 2026-2027 school year begins, we will be revisiting our Strategic Plan. Although it needs to be updated, its stated core purpose for SCEC remains the same.

To provide intensive, innovative education programs and related services for students with disabilities in member and non-member districts so that they become changemakers.

To provide collaborative professional learning for educators.

To provide other high-quality, cost-effective services to meet the changing needs of member districts.

Motion, J. Cabral: To support rewriting & updating SCEC’s Strategic Plan.

Second, S. Holcomb

All in favor

10.00 - Other Superintendent Issues

*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) monitors attendance. DESE officials are required to audit Educational Collaboratives once in a six-year cycle.

10.20 -Schedule of proposed SCEC Board of Directors Meetings for 2026-2027

<u>Date</u>	<u>Meeting Description</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
October 29, 2026	Board of Directors Luncheon	12:30 - 1:00 PM	GLC-2
	Board of Directors Meeting	1:00 – 2:30 PM	GLC-2
December 11, 2026 (Friday)	Frank Gallishaw Awards/Luncheon	11:00 AM - 1:00PM	UMassD
	Board of Directors Meeting	1:00 – 2:30 PM	UMassD
January 14, 2027	Board of Directors Luncheon	12:30 – 1:00 PM	GLC-2
	Board of Directors Meeting	1:00 – 2:30 PM	GLC-2
February 25, 2027	Board of Directors Luncheon	12:30 – 1:00 PM	GLC-2
	Board of Directors Meeting	1:00 – 2:30 PM	GLC-2
April 15, 2027*	Board of Directors Luncheon	12:30 – 1:00 PM	GLC-2
	Board of Directors Meeting	1:00 - 2:30 PM	GLC-2
June 10, 2027	Board of Directors Luncheon	12:30 – 1:00 PM	GLC-2
	Board of Directors Meeting	1:00 – 2:30 PM	GLC-2

*Note: During the week of April 12 – 16, 2027, Executive Assistants will be presented Flower Bouquets and Certificates of Appreciation by Leah Thibault in their offices.

10.30 - Continuous Professional Learning Experiences Supported by SCEC for FY26.

10.31 – ASCD, June 28 – July 1, 2026 in San Antonio

10.32 - 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 – In Seekonk, 3- Year leases for school buildings to house substantially separate programs at the North School (grades 1-8) and Gallishaw High School and an Inclusion Classroom at Seekonk High School have been renewed.

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 – In search of new spaces, on September 3, 2026 a team of SCEC leaders, including Board-Vice Chair John Cabral, toured a nursing home in Taunton with a team of Taunton officials. Unfortunately, the space didn't have the components that we need.

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 – Executive Session

Motion, J. Cabral: To move into Executive Session at 2:06 PM.

Roll Call vote:

J. Cabral

J. Schoonover

S. Holcomb

M. Ryan

F. Roy

B. Starkie

All in Favor- Aye

14.00 - Adjournment

Motion, J. Schoonover: Motion to adjourn at 2:55 PM.

Second, J. Cabral

All in Favor