

SOUTHEASTERN COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
(SECEP)
MINUTES OF MEETING
SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

The Southeastern Cooperative Educational Programs (SECEP) held its Joint Board Meeting on Wednesday, September 30, 2020, virtually by Zoom.

PRESENT: Board Members: Mr. Thomas Mercer, Mr. Robert Holt, Mr. Carlos Clanton, Ms. Angelia Allen, Dr. Carolyn Modlin, Dr. Judith Brooks-Buck, and Mrs. Kimberly Melnyk

ABSENT: Mrs. Vicky Hulick

PRESENT: Committee of Superintendents: Dr. Jared Cotton, Dr. Sharon Byrdsong, Dr. Elie Bracy III, Dr. John Gordon, III, and Dr. Roni Myers-Daub, Director of Special Education, representing Dr. Aaron Spence

ABSENT: Committee of Superintendents: Dr. Tamara Sterling, Dr. Jim Thornton, Dr. Gwendolyn Shannon, and Dr. Aaron Spence

PRESENT: SECEP Staff: Mr. David Sadler and Mrs. Brenda Estes

The Joint Board Meeting called to order at 12:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Thomas Mercer asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2020, Joint Board meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Carlos Clanton and seconded by Mrs. Kimberly Melnyk. Motion carried. (Ayes 7, Nays 0)

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Mr. David Sadler stated that the superintendents had nominated and selected Dr. Jared Cotton to continue to be the Executive Officer for the SECEP Committee of Superintendents for the 2020-2021SY. Mr. Robert Holt nominated Mr. Thomas Mercer as Chairperson and was seconded by Mr. Carlos Clanton. Nominations closed. Mr. Robert Holt nominated Dr. Judith Brooks-Buck as Vice-Chairperson and Mr. Carlos Clanton seconded it. Nominations closed. The motion to appoint Mr. Thomas Mercer as Chairperson and Dr. Judith Brooks-Buck as Vice-Chairperson was unanimous. (Ayes 7, Nays 0). The slate of officers was presented:

Executive Officer:	Dr. Jared Cotton
Chairperson:	Mr. Thomas Mercer
Vice Chairperson:	Dr. Judith Brooks-Buck
Clerk:	Mr. David Sadler

Deputy Clerk: Mrs. Brenda Estes
Agent: Dr. Sharon Byrdsong
Deputy Agent: Mr. Steven Jenkins

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

None.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER:

REQUEST FOR LONG-TERM CAPITAL PROJECT FUND MONIES:

Suffolk Public Schools submitted a letter requesting \$350,000 from the Long-Term Project Fund for capital improvements at the SECEP Center at John F. Kennedy Middle School. The funds will be used for replacing lighting in all classrooms, painting of the walls and doors, abating the floors and replace with tiles, replace baseboards, removal of classroom chalkboards to be replaced with whiteboards, replace ceiling tiles, installation of cameras for security and surveillance of the parking lot and exits, and replacement of the current intercom system. A motion was made by Dr. Judith Brooks-Buck and seconded by Kimberly Melnyk. (Ayes 7, Nays, 0). Motion carried.

Dr. John Gordon, Superintendent of Suffolk Public Schools, thanked the Joint Board for their approval of funds to complete the capital improvements needed.

REQUEST TO CARRYOVER FUNDS FROM FY2020 TO FY2021 – LONG-TERM PROJECT FUND:

Dr. Jared Cotton stated that the Committee of Superintendents met earlier and had recommended the request to approve a carryover from FY2020 of \$285,000 for capital one-time expenditures into FY2021. These funds will be expended by the end of FY2021. The expenditures will include 660 Chromebooks and accessories for the devices and additional web cameras for existing computers that lack video capability (approximately \$182,000). Other equipment/furniture expenditures due to COVID-19 such as movable screens, sneeze guards, etc. (Approximately \$2,500). Carryover funds will also cover the purchase of unexpected Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and sanitation supplies to support SECEP staff and students in divisions unable to provide PPE for SECEP classrooms in their host school buildings (\$100,500).

Mr. Sadler stated that if approved by the Joint Board, this would leave an unaudited Fund Balance for allocations in the Long Term Capital Project Fund of \$1,679,929 from FY2020. This is an increase of \$484,130 compared to the FY2019 allocation, which was \$1,195,799.

A motion was made by Mr. Thomas Mercer, and seconded by Dr. Judith Brooks-Buck. Motion carried. (Ayes 7, Nays 0)

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

PROGRAM UPDATES:

SECEP WELCOME BACK EVENT:

Mr. Sadler stated that SECEP held a Webinar through Zoom for the Opening Session for all staff on August 26 2020, to begin the 2020-21SY. Approximately 720 staff participated. It was a 2-hour virtual event and SECEP was able to recognize staff and provide information on opening the schools for the 2020-21SY.

SECEP INSTRUCTION – OPTION 1 AND OPTION 2 AND THE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT REPORT:

SECEP is following each of the division's guidelines for re-opening of schools for the 2020-21SY. SECEP is juggling all of the different plans across each of the divisions as students return face-to-face.

All of the divisions gave parents two (2) Options. Option 1: (On Campus/Hybrid) Instruction. Students are on campus anywhere from zero to 5 days back in school face to face. Most divisions started temporarily on line as well as students being 100% virtual. Option 2: (100% Virtual). Mr. Sadler presented a chart by division indicating the percentage of students who were Hybrid or Virtual. SECEP teachers are taking their classroom assignments and are teaching both virtual – on-line and face to-face. It has been a challenge.

Mr. Carlos Clanton praised SECEP for all of their efforts in teaching and meeting the needs of our special needs students during this unprecedented time.

Mr. Sadler reviewed the information presented on each program. The students in The Reach Program have been greatly impacted by COVID-19. St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children has restricted the students from leaving the facility. Any of the students that had been going out to comprehensive schools are not able to attend. St. Mary's has not allowed SECEP staff to provide face-to-face teaching. SECEP staff are providing virtual instruction. We are currently collaborating with St. Mary's staff to provide the necessary services asynchronously. SECEP did run a Summer Program with most of the instruction virtual with the exception of Virginia Beach Public Schools.

PERSONNEL REPORT AND UPDATE:

Mr. Sadler presented the Personnel Report on SECEP staff. He reviewed the racial composition of the staff, hires pertaining to replacement, and the reasons for professional staff leaving SECEP. The higher percentages of our teachers leaving were due in part to being hired by our local divisions, retirement, and moving from the area. Included in the report was information on Service Awards and the SECEP Teachers and Teacher Assistants of the Year Awards.

VDOE REVIEW OF THE REACH PROGRAM: ST. MARY'S HOME/LAKE TAYLOR TRANSITIONAL CARE HOSPITAL:

The Virginia Department of Education staff began their review of The REACH Program last FALL 2019, at St. Mary's Home and Lake Taylor Transitional Care Hospital. In February 2020, SECEP received their findings. A Corrective Action Plan was put together and submitted to VDOE on June 15, 2020. The plan was delayed because of COVID-19 and the closure happening at the same time. We received their feedback on September 17, 2020. SECEP is currently reviewing the VDOE adjustments and are putting together our corrective actions. The Plan and Corrective Actions will be completed by February 1, 2021.

SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT: OCR REVIEW OF SECEP UPDATE:

SECEP is still under review by OCR. The review began in September 2017. SECEP is still looking for a resolution. LaRana Owens, formerly of Reed, Smith, LLP, is SECEP's point of contact working with OCR. The group of special education lawyers from Reed, Smith have gone over to Sands, Anderson, PC based in Richmond, Virginia. SECEP wanted to continue representation by Ms. Owens for consistency and has valued the work that the team has done in the past. Kathy Mehfoud of Reed, Smith, is looking to retire at the end of this year. Reed, Smith no longer wants to maintain a Special Education Department. SECEP is hoping for a resolution this year, but things can move slowly at the federal level.

SECEP LOCATIONS:

Mr. Sadler stated that an updated list on SECEP locations was included in the board packets for the 2020-21SY. SECEP appreciates the collaboration with all the division's supervisors and building administrators. This is especially helpful during this COVID-19 season and re-opening of schools.

JOINT BOARD ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

None.

PERSONNEL DOCKET:

A motion was made by Dr. Judith Brooks-Buck, and seconded by Mr. Robert Holt, to accept the Personnel Docket. Motion carried. (Ayes 7, Nays 0).

THE NEXT MEETING DATE AND TIME:

The next meeting of the SECEP Joint Board will be held on Wednesday, February 3, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



David B. Sadler
Clerk of the Board

APPROVED:



Mr. Thomas Mercer, Chairperson