

SOUTHEASTERN COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
(SECEP)
MINUTES OF MEETING
MARCH 30, 2022

The Southeastern Cooperative Educational Programs (SECEP) held its Joint Board Meeting on Wednesday, March 20, 2022, virtually by Zoom.

PRESENT: Board Members: Mr. Thomas Mercer, Dr. Judith Brooks-Buck (arrived 1:07pm after the minutes were approved), Mr. Carlos Clanton, Mrs. Kimberly Melnyk, Mr. Vernon Tillage, Mr. Robert Holt

ABSENT: Board Member: Mr. Michael Vines, Mr. William Worsham

PRESENT: Committee of Superintendents: Dr. Jared Cotton, Dr. Sharon Byrdsong, Dr. Elie Bracy III, Dr. John Gordon, III, and Dr. Gwendolyn Shannon

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

PRESENT: SECEP Staff: Mr. David Sadler, Mrs. Laura Armstrong and Ms. Neysha Pearson

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

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Thomas Mercer, Chairperson, welcomed everyone to the SECEP virtual Board meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Thomas Mercer, Chairperson, asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 2, 2022, Joint Board Meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Thomas Holt and seconded by Mr. Vernon Tillage. Motion carried (Ayes 5, Nays 0).

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

One email from a SECEP employee was received as Public Comment for this meeting. This email was originally sent to Mr. David Sadler by Debbie Egress, a veteran speech therapist. She wanted to provide her perspective and what she is hearing from her colleagues regarding compensation in comparison with other divisions where SECEP employees work. There was no discussion from Board.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER:

- Request Approval of FY2021 Funds To Be Added To The SECEP Long-Term Capital Project Fund:
 - Mr. Sadler made a request that \$365,116 in unexpended funds from FY2021 be distributed into the FY2022 Long-Term Capital Project Fund. Mr. Thomas Mercer asked for a motion to approve the request to transfer the leftover funds. A motion was made by Mr. Thomas Holt and was seconded by Mr. Carlos Clanton. Motion carried (Ayes 5, Nays 0).

- Recommendation On May 25, 2022 Meeting Type:
 - Dr. Cotton suggested holding an in-person meeting for the May 25, 2022 meeting, as it will be Mr. Sadler’s last meeting, with the availability of attending virtually for those who prefer to participate remotely. The Board agreed to a hybrid meeting. No vote was required.
- 2022-2023 Meeting Dates:
 - Dr. Bracy will review upcoming Superintendent meeting dates; Joint Board meeting dates will be set during the next Board meeting.
- SECEP Executive Director Search:
 - The announcement has been posted. Interviews are scheduled to be held during the month of April.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SECEP:

PROGRAM UPDATES:

Mr. Sadler informed the Board of SECEP’s two upcoming plant sales, as well as the upcoming Food Drive.

PROGRAM ENROLLMENT REPORT:

Mr. Sadler reviewed enrollment and referral information presented on each of the five programs SECEP operates. Although ASP, EBICS, TRAEP (Reg Ed), and REACH (PT) have all seen slight increases in their ADMs since the February 2022 meeting, based on the projected budget, SECEP is currently under-utilized by roughly 50%.

Mr. Mercer asked Mr. Sadler if SECEP was fully staffed based on maximum student enrollment.

Mr. Sadler stated that SECEP is fully staffed in the program with guaranteed programs because SECEP is receiving those funds. Positions are frozen in the ASP, EBICS & REACH programs based on the number of students projected in August to attend in September. Currently, there are 7 to 9 teacher positions and several TA positions that are frozen between the 3 programs, as SECEP does not have the revenue to be fully staffed. Mr. Sadler also stated that there is an inability to staff due to a shortage of applicants.

Mr. Mercer asked if SECEP was fully staffed in guaranteed programs.

Mr. Sadler stated that SECEP is fully staffed in the guaranteed programs when there is staff to hire, which has been a difficulty this year.

Mr. Mercer asked if there is an issue staffing the guaranteed programs due to lack of applicants, will there be a surplus of unexpended funds.

Mr. Sadler answered in the affirmative and stated that the revenue SECEP received for staffing needs would be returned back to the districts as unexpended funds.

Mr. Mercer asked if those monies were already reflected in what was discussed in the current meeting, or would it be for next year.

Mr. Sadler stated it would be discussed in the upcoming year. As the year is completed, projected unexpended revenue will be discussed in September meeting.

REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED SECEP FY2023 OPERATING BUDGET:

Mr. Sadler stated that the Proposed Operating Budget for FY2023 is being presented for review and discussion.

Mr. Sadler proceeded to highlight and discuss the proposed budget:

- The overall Proposed Budget for FY2023 is \$59,507,309, a 3.91% increase over the FY2022 operating budget.
- Revenue continues to come primarily from student tuition provided by our participating divisions.
- The only other revenue comes from the Virginia Department of Education grants for the Tidewater Regional Alternative Education Program (TRAEP), projected to be \$705,201 for FY2023, and \$52,000 from the VDOE VPSARP Tech Grant that SECEP has received each fiscal year for the past several years.
- Norfolk Public Schools (NPS) proposes to raise the Teacher Salary schedule at Step 1 to \$49,500. This is an increase of 4.87% over the FY22 \$47,200 Step 1 salary. The subsequent steps of the NPS Teacher Salary Schedule will receive an adjustment to provide an average overall teacher salary increase of 5.8% in FY23. The NPS Proposed Budget provides classified employees a step increase and salary adjustment that would give an average increase of 7.5% for all classified positions. NPS proposes a schedule adjustment that would provide a 1 step increase for the Administrative Salary Schedule that would result in an average increase of 4.2%.
- NPS projects a 6% increase in healthcare costs.
- There are no projected increases or changes to Virginia Retirement Systems (VRS) for the upcoming school year.
- In addition to the above, SECEP proposes to continue the following benefits which have been provided in the previous SECEP budgets:
 - Continue to provide a supplement to contracted Teachers and Teacher Assistants for filling difficult to staff assignments. Currently, NPS has this supplement at \$1,146 annually.
 - Continue to provide \$88,000 for Tuition Assistance as part of the overall budget. These funds are primarily used to assist provisionally licensed teachers in completing the required coursework to gain full licensure. Secondly, these funds help staff also maintain license and certificate renewals.
- There is a 0.55% increase in 'Other' Expenditures, which includes everything below salary, wages, and benefits. With the \$21,000 (0.55%) increase, 'Other' Expenditures represents 6.41% of the overall budget. Salaries, wages, and benefits make up 93.59% of the proposed budget.
- Projected Student Enrollment:
 - The Re-ED Program – Guarantees will decrease from 277 to 262, a reduction of 15 students, for the FY23 Proposed budget.
 - The Autism Spectrum Program (ASP) is projecting a decrease of 1 in membership.
 - The EBICS Program will increase by 1.
 - The REACH Program is expected to decrease by 10 Full-time students, and by one (1) Part-time student.

REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET FOR FY2023:(continued)

- Regular Ed TRAEP student numbers are expected to stay the same, while Special Ed TRAEP numbers are expected to decrease by 4.
- Mr. Sadler stated since 2017, the trend in enrollment is on a downward trajectory. SECEP is projecting to end FY22 with just over 1,000 students but is projecting 1,136 for the FY23 budget.
- Mr. Mercer asked what an Education Specialist is.
 - Mr. Sadler answered that an Education Specialist is an administrative level position that helps support the classrooms and teachers. They provide a continuity of service along with Principals and Teacher Specialists by supporting new/younger teachers who do not have much experience in providing the intensive support needed by SECEP students.
 - Mr. Mercer asked where the reduction in two (2) Education Specialist positions is coming from.
 - Mr. Sadler stated that one would come from a frozen Education Specialist position in Re-ED program, and the other from the TRAEP program from a retiring Education Specialist.
 - Mr. Holt asked if Education Specialist were able to move up to Assistant Principals and Principals.
 - Mr. Sadler stated that this would be the next typical next step for an Education Specialist. SECEP requires its newly hired Education Specialist to obtain Administration/Supervision license endorsement so that they can move into those position if/when they become available.

JOINT BOARD ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

None.

PERSONNEL DOCKET:

Mr. Mercer asked for a motion to accept and approve the personnel docket. A motion was made by Dr. Brooks-Buck and was seconded by Mr. Clanton. The motion carried (Ayes 6, Nays 0).

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next meeting of the SECEP Joint Board will be held on Wednesday, May 25, 2022, at 12:30PM. This meeting will be a hybrid (In-Person and Virtual) format.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:10PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



David B. Sadler,
Clerk of the Board

APPROVED:



Mr. Thomas Mercer
Chairperson