

SOUTHEASTERN COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
(SECEP)
MINUTES OF MEETING
MARCH 29, 2023

The Southeastern Cooperative Educational Programs (SECEP) held its Joint Board meeting on Wednesday, March 29, 2023, at the Smithfield Building in Norfolk, VA.

PRESENT: **Board Members:** Mr. Thomas Mercer, Mr. Robert Holt, Mr. Michael Cunningham, Dr. Judith Brooks-Buck, Mrs. Kimberly Melnyk

ABSENT: **Board Members:** Mr. Carlos Clanton, Ms. Quniana Futrell, Mrs. Lynn Bradley

PRESENT: **Committee of Superintendents:** Dr. Jared Cotton, Dr. Theo Cramer, Dr. Nicole DeVries for Dr. Elie Bracey, Dr. Michael Cataldo for Dr. Sharon Byrdsong, Dr. John Gordon, Dr. Roni Myers-Daub for Dr. Aaron Spence

ABSENT: **Committee of Superintendents:** Dr. Elie Bracey, Dr. Sharon Byrdsong, Dr. Gwendolyn Shannon, Dr. Carlton Carter

PRESENT: **SECEP Staff:** Mrs. Laura Armstrong, Ms. Neysha Pearson

OTHER: Aires Coleman, Greg Bussink (Clifton, Larson & Allen LLP) via Zoom

The Joint Board Meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Mercer requested a motion to approve the minutes from the February 01, 2023, Joint Board meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Robert Holt and seconded by Dr. Judith Brooks-Buck. Motion carried (Ayes 5, Nays 0)

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

None.

AUDIT REPORT:

Ms. Aires Coleman, from Clifton, Larson & Allen, presented the preliminary findings of the audit. The full audit was not completed at the time of the Board meeting. Ms. Coleman explained the audit process and changes in criteria from last year. The auditors did not find any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. SECEP is expected to have an unmodified opinion, which is the highest level of assurance that can be given. The audit was compliant with all fiduciary and accounting procedures.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER:

Dr. Cotton informed the Board of Mrs. Armstrong's intent to present a recommendation to relocate SECEP's administrative offices and a recommendation regarding a particular employee group. Dr. Cotton stated that the Superintendents are in favor of both recommendations.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Mrs. Armstrong provided the following information to the Board in her report.

Strategic Plan Update: The current Strategic Plan is progressing according to plan. Mrs. Armstrong informed the Board that during January, parents had the opportunity to complete a survey and provide feedback. Mrs. Armstrong provided an overview of the goals in the draft of the plan. SECEP would like to expand employee recruitment by engaging current staff in recruitment efforts. SECEP is reviewing safety equipment to make sure all equipment is up to date. SECEP staff would like to continue building resources using platforms such as Schoology and Canvas and partner with participating divisions to share resources.

2017 Office of Civil Rights Compliance (OCR) Review: SECEP has submitted all documents as required. OCR recommended minor revisions to SECEP's Procedures for Seclusion and Restraint. The modifications were completed, and the document was re-submitted to OCR.

SECEP Administrative Office Lease Proposal: The current lease will expire in October 2024. Mrs. Armstrong asked the Board to approve SECEP's administrative offices relocating to the first floor of the existing building at 6160 Kempsville Circle, effective January 1, 2024. The move from Suite 300 B to Suite 100 B will reduce office space by approximately 3000 square feet, which is not needed. The new lease will save approximately \$41,000 per year for the first five years and \$11,000 per year for the remaining five years. Moving costs and replacing and replenishment of office furniture will be additional expenses.

Mr. Mercer asked for a motion to approve the recommendation to relocate. A motion was made by Dr. Brooks-Buck and was seconded by Mrs. Kimberly Melnyk. Motion carried (Ayes 5, Nays 0)

Program Enrollment: There has been an increase of 21 students in TRAEP (14 in Regular Ed, 7 in Special ED), 32 students in Re ED, nine students in ASP, two students in EBICS, and five students in REACH (full day). There were no changes in REACH partial day to report at this time.

FY2024 Proposed Budget Review: Mrs. Armstrong stated that the proposed budget aims for parity with Norfolk Public Schools with regard to salary schedules. Mrs. Armstrong highlighted the following information about salaries:

- First-year teacher salaries will increase from \$49,500 to \$53,000. Current 10-month teachers and 11-month administrators will receive an average salary increase of 6.9%. The average salary increase for current 12-month administrators will be 5.1%
- The implementation of phase two of the salary decompression is also included in the proposed budget. Employees hired before February 2014 will receive an additional two step increase, roughly 4.5%. Employees hired between Feb 2014 and Jan 2016 will receive an additional one step increase.
- The proposed budget includes a 1% employee bonus.

Mrs. Armstrong projected minimal changes in enrollment in REACH, ASP & EBICS for the 23-24 school year. The most significant increase in enrollment is expected in TRAEP and Re ED programs.

Program Update: Mrs. Armstrong shared information and pictures of activities and community service projects. Mr. Chatman, SECEP Suffolk Center Principal, hosted a brunch for parents during Parent/Teacher Conference Day. SECEP culinary students catered the event. All centers and classrooms participated in Read Across America Day. Two students from Windsor Woods Elementary participated in a World Math Day competition. They won the bronze medals. The Chesapeake Center and Renaissance Academy students will host Spring plant sales in April.

JOINT BOARD ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

None.

PERSONNEL DOCKET:

Mrs. Armstrong read the MOTION FOR GOING INTO CLOSED SESSION. A motion to enter a closed session was made by Dr. Brooks-Buck and seconded by Mr. Holt. Motion Carried (Ayes 5, Nays 0)

Mrs. Armstrong read a RESOLUTION OF CERTIFICATION OF THE CLOSED SESSION OF March 29, 2023. A motion was made by Dr. Brooks-Buck and was seconded by Mr. Holt. Motion carried (Ayes 5, Nays 0)

Regarding matter A discussed during the closed session: Mr. Mercer requested a motion to approve the matter. A motion was made by Mr. Holt and was seconded by Mr. Cunningham. Motion carried (Ayes 4, Nays 0, Abstained 1)

Regarding matter B discussed during the closed session: Mr. Mercer called for a motion to approve. A motion was made by Dr. Brooks-Buck and was seconded by Mr. Holt. Motion carried (Ayes 5, Nays 0)

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:59 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Laura W. Armstrong,
Clerk of the Board

APPROVED:



Mr. Thomas Mercer
Chairperson