

**APPROVED MINUTES
SOUTHEASTERN COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
JOINT BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 24, 2024**

The SECEP Joint Board ("Board") convened on January 24, 2024, at 12:30 pm at the SECEP Administrative office and virtually. Attending the meeting were:

JOINT BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Thomas Mercer	Chesapeake City Public Schools	Chairman
Mr. Norman Pool	Chesapeake City Public Schools	
Mr. Robert Holt	Franklin Public Schools	
Mr. John Collick	Isle of Wight Public Schools	
Ms. Brandi Perkins	Isle of Wight Public Schools	Alternate
Mr. Carlos Clanton	Norfolk Public Schools	
Mrs. Kimberly Melnyk	Virginia Beach City Public Schools	

SUPERINTENDENTS:

Dr. Jared Cotton	Chesapeake City Public Schools	Executive Officer
Dr. Sharon Byrdsong	Norfolk Public Schools	
Dr. Theo Cramer	Isle of Wight Public Schools	
Dr. Elie Bracy III	Portsmouth Public Schools	
Dr. Donald Robertson	Virginia Beach City Public Schools	

SECEP STAFF:

Mrs. Laura Armstrong	Executive Director
Mrs. Edna Felton	Finance Coordinator
Ms. Neysha Pearson	Executive Assistant

ABSENT:

Dr. Judith Brooks-Buck	Suffolk Public Schools	Joint Board Member
Mrs. Quniana Futrell	Portsmouth Public Schools	Joint Board Member
Dr. Carlton Carter	Franklin City Public Schools	Superintendent
Dr. John Gordon	Suffolk Public Schools	Superintendent
Dr. Gwendolyn Shannon	Southampton Public Schools	Superintendent

OTHER ATTENDEES:

Ms. Andrea Hall-Leonard represented Dr. Gwendolyn Shannon, Superintendent Southampton County Public Schools

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Mr. Thomas Mercer called the meeting to order at 12:33 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Mercer requested a motion to approve the September 27, 2023 meeting minutes. A motion was made by Ms. Melnyk and seconded by Mr. Carlos Clanton. The motion carried. (Ayes 5, Nays 0, Abstentions 0)

ELECTION AND APPROVAL OF OFFICERS:

Mr. Mercer called for a nomination for Chairman. Ms. Kimberly Melnyk nominated Mr. Robert Holt. Mr. Carlos Clanton seconded the nomination. The motion carried (Ayes 5, Nays 0, Abstentions 0)

Mr. Mercer called for a nomination for Vice-Chairman. Mr. Carlos Clanton nominated Ms. Kimberly Melnyk. Mr. Robert Holt seconded the nomination. The motion carried. (Ayes 5, Nays 0, Abstentions 0)

Mr. Carlos Clanton motioned to approve the Slate of Officers as recommended by the Superintendents. Mr. Holt seconded the motion. The motion carried. (Ayes 5, Nays 0, Abstentions 0)

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Dr. Toney McNair Jr., Uniserve Director for the Virginia Education Association (VEA), addressed the Board, acknowledging familiar faces and detailing his new expanded role, which now includes additional areas beyond Portsmouth. He expressed confidence in the leadership's receptiveness to concerns raised by VEA members at SECEP. He expressed his commitment to collaborating with various school divisions to ensure a cohesive educational experience for students, emphasizing the importance of unity among students, parents, and staff for a successful educational journey.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER:

Dr. Cotton reported that the Suffolk SECEP Center is being rebuilt in conjunction with the rebuild of John F. Kennedy Middle School in Suffolk. Superintendents have discussed using funds from the long-term project fund to support the cost at previous committee meetings. Superintendents agreed that localities with students at the Suffolk Center will use long-term project funds to support the rebuild. Dr. Cotton reported that Dr. Gordon had contacted Dr. Cramer and Dr. Carter for further discussion. The Board can expect letters from them at the March meeting requesting approval to use the Isle of Wight and Franklin long-term project funds for the Suffolk SECEP Center.

Mr. Mercer asked Dr. Cotton to explain the concept of the long-term project fund to the new board members. Dr. Cotton explained that the long-term project fund is sourced from the carry-over of unexpended funds at the end of each fiscal year. Divisions can access the funds for capital improvements and one-time expenditures, such as technology or building needs, with the approval of the Board.

Dr. Cotton asked Ms. Armstrong if there was anything further to add. Ms. Armstrong said the FY23 audit, which includes the long-term project fund, is in progress and is expected to be completed at the end of April, making funds available in May.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

BUDGET AND FINANCE:

Ms. Armstrong reported that SECEP's budget development timeline has been progressing as planned since its initiation in July. SECEP's Finance Department has met with Norfolk Public Schools' Finance Department to ensure financial policies and procedures are aligned. Division Special and Alternative Education Directors have submitted Re-Ed Guarantees and TRAEP Commitments for FY 25. Transitioning to MUNIS for budget and human resources management is underway. Efforts to ensure data accuracy in the new system are ongoing. Summaries of

revenues and expenditures by program and an accounting of expenses for technology upgrades and the central office relocation were provided.

ENROLLMENT REPORT:

Ms. Armstrong provided an overview of enrollment across programs. Ms. Armstrong also explained the acronyms of the five programs: TRAEP is the Tidewater Regional Alternative Education Program. Re-Ed is the Re-Education of Children Program; both are located in SECEP Centers. Raising Expectations and Abilities for Children with Complex Health Needs (REACH) is at St. Mary's Home and Lake Taylor Transition Hospital and serves medically fragile students. SECEP has two programs in SECEP Centers and comprehensive schools: the Autism Spectrum Program (ASP) and Educational and Behavioral Interventions for Challenging Students (EBICS).

OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE REVIEW:

An update on the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Resolution Agreement was presented. Individual record reviews for approximately 200 students have been completed and submitted to OCR. Approval of procedures, updated training, and record-keeping processes remain pending.

STRATEGIC PLAN & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

Ms. Armstrong discussed the importance of addressing climate and culture in the organization's strategic plan, particularly amidst challenges in education and teacher recruitment. She highlighted goals to inspire support for collaboration and leadership capacity. SECEP has begun initiatives that include division-specific team-building sessions and a recognition program to recognize staff and students.

Ms. Armstrong discussed efforts to develop talent through a Leadership Forum focused on Education Specialists. The Forum includes training sessions and opportunities for discussion. Feedback surveys have been positive.

Ms. Armstrong also outlined SECEP's goals for recruitment and retention, including, but not limited to, increasing social media presence, community engagement, and staff retention efforts, such as collaborative community service projects with students.

Additional information about the plan and actions SECEP has taken to meet the goals is in the process of being added to the website.

JOINT BOARD ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

Mr. Mercer stated the Suffolk SECEP Center is on the agenda and asked Dr. Cotton to take the lead. Dr. Cotton said he brought this up in his executive report earlier in the meeting; no action is needed until the Board sees the letters.

PERSONNEL DOCKET:

Mr. Mercer read the MOTION FOR ENTERING CLOSED SESSION. Ms. Kimberly Melnyk made a motion to enter into a closed session. Mr. Robert Holt seconded the motion. The motion carried. (Ayes 5, Nays 0, Abstentions 0)

Mr. Mercer read the RESOLUTION CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION. Mr. Carlos Clanton made a motion to resolve the closed session. Mr. Robert Holt seconded the motion. The motion carried. (Ayes 5, Nays 0, Abstentions 0)

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Mercer adjourned the meeting at 1:11 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Armstrong

Laura W. Armstrong
Clerk of the Board

APPROVED:

Thomas A. Mercer Jr.

Mr. Thomas Mercer
Chairman