

**SOUTHEASTERN COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
JOINT BOARD MEETING
MARCH 27, 2024**

The SECEP Joint Board ("Board") convened on March 27, 2024, at 12:36 pm at the SECEP Administrative office and virtually. Attending the meeting were:

JOINT BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Robert Holt	Franklin Public Schools	Chairman
Mrs. Kimberly Melnyk	Virginia Beach City Public Schools	Vice-Chairwoman
Mr. Norman Pool	Chesapeake City Public Schools	
Mr. John Collick	Isle of Wight Public Schools	
Mr. Carlos Clanton*	Norfolk Public Schools	
Mrs. Quniana Futrell*	Portsmouth Public Schools	
Ms. Cassandra Hobbs	Southampton County Public Schools	
Dr. Judith Brooks-Buck	Suffolk Public Schools	

(*) virtual

SUPERINTENDENTS:

Dr. Theo Cramer	Isle of Wight Public Schools	Vice Exec. Officer
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. Jared Cotton	Chesapeake City Public Schools	Superintendent
Dr. Carlton Carter	Franklin City Public Schools	Superintendent
Dr. Sharon Byrdson	Norfolk Public Schools	Superintendent
Dr. Elie Bracy III	Portsmouth Public Schools	Superintendent
Dr. John Gordon	Suffolk Public Schools	Superintendent
Dr. Gwendolyn Shannon	Southampton County Public Schools	Superintendent

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Holt, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 12:36 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Holt asked if there were any additions or corrections to the January 24, 2024, Joint Board Meeting minutes. Hearing none, Mr. Holt approved the minutes as written.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

None.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER:

Dr. Cramer reported that the Superintendents fully endorse the budget proposed by Mrs. Armstrong, including her plan to convene a group to review the current funding model and collaborate with local special education directors to include more flexibility. Superintendents back the realignment of positions to align more closely with Norfolk Public Schools, as reflected in the personnel docket. Superintendents also support allocating funds from Isle of Wight County Schools to Suffolk Public Schools for the SECEP building project in Suffolk, pending financial support letters from other divisions.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

ENROLLMENT REPORT:

Mrs. Armstrong presented the Enrollment Report, highlighting modifications made to the report to eliminate redundancy. Budgeted and March average daily membership in each program were reported: Autism Spectrum (budgeted ADM: 492, March ADM: 429), EBICS (budgeted ADM: 200, March ADM: 135), Re-ED (guaranteed commitments: 295, March ADM: 208), and REACH at St. Mary's Home (budgeted: 54, full-time ADM: 36, March part-time ADM: 4), with the note that part-time students are served at Lake Taylor Hospital. Lastly, TRAEP enrollment (regular education commitments 102, March ADM 60, and special education commitments 50, March ADM 19) was reported.

FINANCIAL REPORTS:

Mrs. Armstrong provided an overview of revenue and expenditures by program. Technology and Alternative-Education grants are projected to be received in the Spring.

PROPOSED FY 2025 OPERATING BUDGET:

Mrs. Armstrong began the proposed FY 2025 Budget presentation by stating SECEP's priority of maintaining quality educational programs while minimizing the increase in cost. The Autism, EBICS, REACH, and TRAEP programs will not increase in rate. The Re-ED rate will decrease. Mrs. Armstrong outlined the action steps taken to achieve the goals set during the budget planning. The action steps include resetting resource deployment, leveraging staffing, and reviewing enrollment trends. Resetting resource deployment involves clarifying expectations for direct service delivery and basing itinerate staff in centers instead of the central office. Consolidating crisis intervention re-certification training is an example of leveraging staffing. Most staff now receive this on professional development days. Whereas staff were previously scheduled to attend this training on instructional days throughout the year, staff are now re-certified on a mid-year professional development day. Consolidation was made possible by doubling the number of trainers. Doubling the number of trainers is less costly and more efficient than pulling staff out of classrooms for training on instructional days. Additionally, all centers now have at least one trainer in the building, making practice and review sessions more accessible.

Enrollment trends over the past six school years were reviewed. Enrollment declined during the 2019-2020 school year due to the pandemic. Although divisions began offering in-person learning options at the start of the 2020-2021 school year, enrollment continued to be impacted

by a reluctance to return to buildings. Moderate but stable growth in enrollment began during the 2022-2023 school year and has continued.

A progress update on the Munis project was provided. The Munis project is the human resources and finance transition from Excel to MUNIS was provided. A thorough scrub of data was conducted to ensure the data in Munis is accurate. The Munis project resulted in removing unfilled positions from previous budget cycles and re-aligning positions in human resources, finance, and technology departments with Norfolk Public Schools.

Dr. Brooks-Buck asked if the position realignment involves changing existing staff positions or hiring new employees for the desired roles. Mrs. Armstrong clarified that the realignment is for current employees. The alignment aims to transition job titles to the correct pay grade. No employee will be subject to a salary reduction. If necessary, the employee's step will be adjusted so compensation will not be impacted.

Mr. Clanton asked if the plan aligns years of experience with steps and for details on how the step phase-in would be implemented.

Mrs. Felton, Finance Coordinator, elaborated on the realignment process and provided examples, such as a promotion, where an employee may transition between salary scales. Employees will not lose money in this transition, as adjustments were made considering each individual's current salary and position.

Mrs. Armstrong concluded the presentation of the Proposed FY 25 Budget by providing the Board with an overview of SECEP's organizational chart, which includes some restructuring based on the program's current needs. The organization chart reflects hiring a Director of Human Resources as directed by the Board.

JOINT BOARD ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

LONG-TERM PROJECT FUND:

Mrs. Armstrong reviewed the Long Term Project fund balances as presented to the Board at the January 24, 2024 meeting for the record: June 30, 2022, Audited Fund Balance: \$7,246,673.00; September 28, 2022, Additional Funds Approved by the Board: \$563,542.00; June 30, 2023 Funds Approved disbursement to Virginia Beach City Public Schools for the installation of updated security equipment at the SECEP Center: \$7,109.00; June 30, 2023, Unaudited Fund Balance: \$7,803,106.00; Unaudited Fund Balance Available for Allocation: \$3,597,562.00; September 27, 2023 Unaudited Funds Available: \$11,400,668.00. There have been no changes to fund balances to date.

Ms. Armstrong presented a letter from Isle of Wight County Schools Superintendent, Dr. Theo Cramer, to the Board. The purpose of the letter is to request \$38,943.50 of the divisions available funds from the Long -Term Project Fund to be used in support of the SECEP Suffolk Center rebuild. Ms. Armstrong stated that, if approved, the funds will be available for disbursement after the FY 2023 audit is completed. Cliff, Larsen

Mr. Holt called for a motion to approve the Isle of Wight funds transfer. The motion was made by Mr. Collick and seconded by Dr. Brooks-Buck. The motion carried (Ayes 8, Nays 0, Abstentions 0)

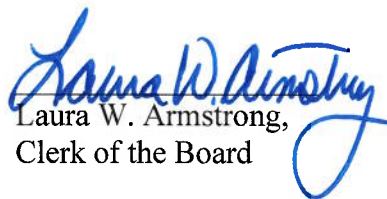
PERSONNEL DOCKET:

Mrs. Armstrong read the MOTION FOR ENTERING CLOSED SESSION. Ms. Kimberly Melnyk seconded the motion.


When the Board came out of closed session, Ms. Armstrong presented the personnel docket. Mr. Holt called for approval of the personnel docket. The personnel docket was approved.

ADJOURNMENT:

Respectfully Submitted,


Laura W. Armstrong,
Clerk of the Board

APPROVED:


Mr. Robert Holt
Chairperson