

**Southeastern Cooperative Educational Programs
Joint Board Meeting Minutes**

September 24, 2025

The SECEP Joint Board convened on September 24, 2025, at 12:00 PM at the SECEP administrative office. Attending the meeting were:

Joint Board Members:

Mr. Norman Pool*	Chesapeake City Public Schools	
Mr. Robert Holt	Franklin City Public Schools	Chair
Ms. Tanya Bhasin*	Norfolk Public Schools	
Ms. Jennifer Tindle	Southampton County Public Schools	
Ms. Kimberly Melnyk	Virginia Beach City Public Schools	Vice-Chair

Superintendents:

Dr. Jared Cotton	Chesapeake City Public Schools	
Dr. Christopher Coleman	Isle of Wight County Schools	Designee
Dr. James Pohl	Norfolk Public Schools	
Dr. Elie Bracy	Portsmouth Public Schools	
Dr. Gwendolyn Shannon*	Southampton County Public Schools	
Dr. Okema Branch	Suffolk County Public Schools	Designee
Dr. Donald Robertson	Virginia Beach City Public Schools	Executive Officer

SECEP Staff:

Ms. Laura Armstrong	Executive Director and Clerk of Board
Dr. Angel Grant	Human Resources Generalist and Deputy Clerk
Dr. Timothy Bostic	Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Dr. Christian Nierman	Assistant Director of Programs
Dr. Dwana White	Director of Human Resources
Ms. Edna Felton	Assistant Director of Finance

(*) Virtual

Call To Order:

Mr. Holt, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm.

Approval Of Minutes:

The minutes for the May 28, 2025, and July 15, 2025, meetings were approved as written.

Comments From the Public:

None.

Report of the Executive Officer:

Dr. Robertson reported on the superintendents' committee meeting. The September 23, 2020, Memorandum of Understanding between SECEP and the divisions in the cooperative will be reviewed by Ms. Armstrong and division directors. Recommendations from the review will be presented to the superintendents and board for consideration in updating the memorandum of understanding. The timeline for developing the FY2027 budget was reviewed. SECEP intends to present the first draft of the budget in January. Norfolk Public Schools will work with SECEP to provide information regarding the proposed compensation. Superintendents will have final approval on enrollment numbers for FY2027. Dr. Robertson has been in communication with Ms. Armstrong about budgeting constraints and considerations for FY2027.

Report of the Executive Director:

Ms. Armstrong presented the enrollment and financial reports that were sent out in advance of the meeting. An overview of the program review conducted by Virginia Beach Public Schools Department of Research and Evaluation was also presented. An electronic copy of the review was sent out before the meeting, and a hard copy was provided at the meeting. The report began with the recognition of Dr. Robertson, Superintendent of Virginia Beach City Public Schools and SECEP Executive Officer, and Dr. Heidie Janicki, Department Director. Data and information used to inform the review included the strategic plan, enrollment, reintegration, staffing data, etc. Additionally, 65 participants took part in focus groups and interviews. A rubric developed by the National Alternative Education Association (NAEA) provided the framework for the review. SECEP's strengths in each practice area were presented along with recommendations for continuous improvement. The SECEP leadership team developed a plan to systematically address each recommendation. Some recommendations have been implemented; the remainder are in progress. The accountability/tracking tool that SECEP will use to monitor progress on the review was presented. The tool and process are based on strategies from the National Implementation Research Network. At the end of the presentation, board members asked clarifying questions and noted that the review and report were comprehensive. Notice of the VDOE review of the educational program at St. Mary's Home and Lake Taylor Transitional Hospital was also included in Ms. Armstrong's report. Compliance reviews are conducted in five-year cycles. SECEP initiated a newsletter highlighting student and staff activities and accomplishments. A copy of the summer newsletter was provided.

Joint Board Items for Discussion:

Ms. Armstrong presented a letter from Dr. Carlton Carter, Franklin City Public Schools Superintendent, requesting a \$41,000 withdrawal from the Long-Term Capital Project Fund to offset the cost of tuition. A motion to approve the request was made by Ms. Melnyk and seconded by Mr. Pool. The motion passed unanimously. A letter from Dr. Theo Cramer, Isle of Wight County Schools Superintendent, requesting a \$65,000 draw from the fund was also presented. Isle of Wight is requesting funds to improve facilities at Smithfield High School, where SECEP students practice skills necessary for jobs and transition services in a joint-use space. A motion to approve the request was made by Ms. Bhasin and seconded by Ms. Melnyk. The motion passed unanimously.

Personnel Agenda:

Dr. White presented the annual personnel report. Licensure data includes all staff with professional licenses. Dr. White also clarified why 105 positions were filled versus the 33 positions that were vacant. Only professional staff are counted in the exit report, whereas in the hiring report, positions that have been added are included, as well as the vacant positions. Dr. White explained that “other” on the staff leaving report means that the former employee did not specify the reason for leaving.

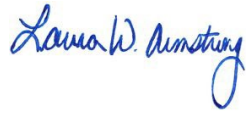
Closed Session:

At approximately 1:08, a motion was made to enter a closed session by Dr. Tindle and seconded by Ms. Bhasin. The motion carried. At 1:30, a motion to certify the closed session was made by Mr. Pool and seconded by Ms. Melnyk. Mr. Holt asked for a motion to approve the personnel docket. Mr. Pool made the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Melnyk. The motion passed.

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Bhasin and seconded by Mr. Pool. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:16 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:



Laura Armstrong
Clerk of the Board

Approved:



Mr. Robert Holt
Chair