



Area Cooperative Educational Services

ACES GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES
THURSDAY, September 11, 2025
SDA Building, 205 Skiff Street, Hamden, CT

Governing Board: Ellen Michaels, Branford; Ann Marie Cullinan; Cheshire; Melissa Mongillo, Derby; Mckimmy Hayes, Meriden; Mike Smith, Milford; James Scully, Naugatuck; Martin Rudnick, North Haven; Susan Riccio, Orange; Carol Oladele, RSD #5 Amity; Lindsay Dahlheimer, RSD #13; Ray Ross, Wallingford

ACES: Dr. Thomas Danehy, Timothy Howes, Dr. William Rice, Rebecca Cuevas, Michelle Coogan, Dee Colson

Not Present: Ansonia, Hamden, West Haven, Woodbridge

Guests: Carolyn Nelson, AEA; Attorney J. Brendan Sharkey; Heather Granja, Program Director, ACES Early Head Start.

I. Welcome/Call to Order

Ms. Susan Riccio called the ACES Governing Board meeting to order at 12:02 pm after determining a quorum was present.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Susan Riccio.
Memorial Moment of Silence for September 11th.

III. Public Participation/Communications

- a. Ms. Susan Riccio welcomed new Board Members Melissa Mongillo of Derby and Alternate James Scully of Naugatuck.
- b. Lindsay Dahlheimer shared that RSD #13 has a new superintendent, Dr. Sydney Leggett, and expressed how pleased she is to be working with ACES.

IV. Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Ray Ross motioned to approve the Regular Board Meeting held on August 6, 2025.
Mr. Martin Rudnick seconded the motion.

All in favor: Motion Passed Unanimously
Opposed: None
Abstention: Ellen Michaels, James Scully

VOTE

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Area Cooperative Educational Services

- V. **Executive Director's Report** - Dr. Thomas M. Danehy
- a. School Opening and Assessment Results on Various Schools - Michelle Coogan.
 - b. Early Head Start Program Update - Dr. William Rice and Heather Granja.
 - c. Moody's Rating Process and Bonding - Mr. Timothy Howes.

- VI. **Filing of the Fiscal Report (subject to audit)** – Ms. Susan Riccio
- Ms. Susan Riccio motioned that the Governing Board accept the financial report as presented, indicating that currently, we are showing a surplus of over \$5 million, though magnet school enrollments and related funding are still being finalized. We will continue recruiting students for magnet and special education schools, expand service contracts, and carefully manage expenses to maintain our strong position. I move that the Board approve the financial report, subject to the annual audit.

Mr. Mike Smith seconded the motion.

All in favor: Motion Passed Unanimously

Opposed: None

Abstention: James Scully

VOTE

- VII. **Approval of Human Capital Development Report** – Ms. Rebecca Cuevas
- Ms. Cuevas presented the HR report, which reported 101 new hires in various positions, 61 resignations, 12 terminations, 76 transfers/position changes, 21 leaves, and 10 retirements. She also shared that we are in the process of adding **mental health services, called LiveBetter**, through the Smart Care Health Clinic. The HR and Compliance Department (HCD) participated in professional development sessions on CT FMLA, investigations, ADA, and reasonable accommodations, facilitated by an attorney from Shipman & Goodwin. Negotiations with **CEA/AEA** and **CSEA** unions are currently underway.

Mr. Ray Ross motioned to accept the Human Capital Development Report.

Mr. Martin Rudnick seconded the motion.

All in favor: Motion Passed Unanimously

Opposed: None

Abstention: James Scully

VOTE



Area Cooperative Educational Services

VIII. **Operations and Early Head Start Report** – Dr. William Rice

Dr. William Rice presented updates on ACES construction projects at CHASE Academy, 670 Wintergreen Avenue, and 88 Bassett Road. He also provided comprehensive updates on Capital Improvement Projects, Operations, Facilities, Maintenance, Internal Transportation, Security, Data Privacy, ACCESS, Magnet School Lottery, Open Choice Program, Community Engagement initiatives, Nutrition Services, Network Services, and the Early Head Start Program.

Dr. William Rice requests approval for the Early Head Start monthly reports, contracts, and summaries.

Mr. Ray Ross motioned to accept the Early Head Start Report.
Mr. Martin Rudnick seconded the motion.

All in favor:	Motion Passed Unanimously
Opposed:	None
Abstention:	James Scully

VOTE

IX. **Schools and Program Report** – Ms. Michelle Coogan

Ms. Coogan shared her report as part of the Executive Director's report.

X. **Possible Executive Session for the purpose of Real Estate Transactions and hiring of a New Executive Director.**

Ms. Susan Ricco moved to enter into Executive Session at 12:51 pm with the Board, Dr. William Rice, Dr. Thomas Danehy, and Tim Howes present.

Ms. Lindsay Dahlheimer motioned to enter an Executive Session for discussion of real estate transactions and the hiring process of a New Executive Director.
Mr. Martin Rudnick seconded the motion.

The Board returned to Regular Session at 1:29 pm.

XI. **New Business**

a. Possible Action to Approve ACES ERSEA Enrollment Vacancy Policy and Procedure.

Ms. Lindsey Dahlheimer motioned to approve the ACES ERSEA Enrollment Vacancy Policy and Procedure.
Mr. Mike Smith seconded the motion.



Area Cooperative Educational Services

All in favor:	Motion Passed Unanimously	
Opposed:	None	
Abstention:	James Scully	VOTE

- b. Possible Action to Approve FY2026 Continuing application for ACES Early Head Start.

Mr. Ray Ross motioned to approve the FY2026 Continuing application for ACES Early Head Start.

Ms. Lindsay Dahlheimer seconded the motion.

All in favor:	Motion Passed Unanimously	
Opposed:	None	
Abstention:	James Scully	VOTE

- c. Possible Action to Approve Bonding Resolution.

Ms. Lindsay Dahlheimer motioned to approve the Bonding Resolution.

Mr. Mike Smith seconded the motion.

All in favor:	Motion Passed Unanimously	
Opposed:	None	
Abstention:	James Scully	VOTE

- d. Possible Action to Approve Plan for Hiring Executive Director.

Ms. Susan Ricco recommended initiation of further discussion on the plan for hiring an Executive Director.

XII. **Other**

- a. Finance Committee Meeting, October 9, 2025.
- b. Regular Board Meeting, October 9, 2025.

XIII. **Adjournment**

Ms. Susan Ricco moved to adjourn at 1:33 pm.

Ms. Lindsay Dahlheimer motioned to adjourn.

Mr. Jim Scully seconded the motion.