



NC-SARA **DRAFT** Board Meeting Minutes

October 23-24, 2025

Omni Parker House, Boston, MA – Kennedy Room

Thursday, October 23, 2025

Board Directors (In-Person)

Eduardo Ochoa (Vice Chair)
John Cavanaugh (Treasurer)
Art Coleman
Laurie Dodge
Susan Heegaard
Cam Maeyaert
Demi Michelau
Terrence Scarborough
Michael Thomas
Sarah Armstrong Tucker
John Ware
Dale Winkler
Joan Wodiska

Board Directors (Virtual)

Coleen Arviso
Lanna Dueck
Carlos Morales

Regional Education Compact Staff & RSC Chairs (In-Person)

Sara Appel, MHEC
Jennifer Armour, MHEC
Patrick Lane, WICHE
Jonathan McNicholes, MHEC
Elisa Jaden, SREB
Charlotte Ochs, NEBHE
Kush Patel, NEBHE
Shelley Plutto, WICHE
Sean Seepersad, NEBHE

Regional Education Compact Staff & RSC Chairs (Virtual)

Alicia Armijo, WICHE
Molly Hall-Martin, WICHE

Guests (In-Person)

Alexander Nally

Guests (Virtual)

Kristin Calder
Nicholas Foose

NC-SARA Staff (In-Person)

Jared Abdirkin
Marianne Boeke
Schuyler Dijk
Nick Ortiz
Ashley Rasmussen
Shannon Walker
Jeannie Pauline Yockey-Fine

NC-SARA Staff (Virtual)

Ray Audett
Rachel Christeson
Emma Hidalgo
Sarah Levy

Welcome & Roll Call

Vice Chair Ochoa opened the NC-SARA Board meeting at 9:03 AM ET. The board secretary called roll with all board directors present except Chair Anderson. The board secretary provided a review of NC-SARA voting procedure alongside several housekeeping items.

Minutes of May 2025 Board Meeting

The board vice chair opened the floor for discussion of the May 2025 meeting minutes and presented a proposed correction. All present agreed to the correction to the May 2025 board meeting minutes as presented.

(ACTION) The board vice chair called for a motion to approve the May 2025 Board Meeting Minutes with the correction to the minutes accepted.

Motion to approve – John Cavanaugh
Seconded – Demi Michelau

All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

Report and Recommendations from the Governance & Nominations Committee

The NC-SARA treasurer opened the governance and nominations committee update with a review of the committee priorities for 2025, including the development of standardized committee procedures, the onboarding of new board directors, and the nominations process for new board directors. It was noted that the window for nominations to the board of directors was June 2, 2025 - July 3, 2025, and that the call for nominations was sent to all stakeholders through an eblast and posted on the NC-SARA website for the duration of the nomination period. Discussion regarding succession planning and the process for selecting new board directors ensued, with the board vice chair noting that all board feedback will be discussed during the next governance and nominations committee meeting. The treasurer then proceeded to call for motions on the three action items of the governance and nominations committee.

Elect New Board Directors for First Three-Year Term (2026-2028)

(ACTION) The treasurer called for a motion to approve the following slate of new board directors for their first three-year term: Tamara Baysinger; Bettyjo Bouchey; Alexander Nally; Dennis Olson; Austin Reid; Karol Schmidt; Sean Seepersad; and Julie Woodruff.

Motion to approve – Terrence Scarborough
Seconded – Sarah Armstrong Tucker
Discussion – Demi Michelau expressed appreciation for the board’s September session to review the short-list of candidates, with a request to keep doing this moving forward.

All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

Approve the NC-SARA Governance & Nominations Committee Chair (2026)

(ACTION) The treasurer called for a motion to approve Joan Wodiska as the chair of the NC-SARA governance and nominations committee for 2026.

Motion to approve – Cam Maeyaert

Seconded – Terrence Scarborough

Discussion – Joan Wodiska plans to appoint Terrence Scarborough as the 2026 vice chair of the NC-SARA governance and nominations committee.

All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

Approve the slate of board officers (2026-2027)

(ACTION) The treasurer called for a motion to approve the following slate of board officers for 2026-2027: Eduardo Ochoa as NC-SARA Board Chair; Cam Maeyaert as NC-SARA Board Vice Chair; and John Ware and NC-SARA Treasurer.

Motion to approve – Joan Wodiska

Seconded – Sarah Armstrong Tucker

Abstention – Eduardo Ochoa

All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

Report and Recommendations from the Finance Committee

The treasurer opened the report of the finance committee by indicating that NC-SARA had a good financial year and a clean audit, and that the organization was in the late stages of coming to an agreement on the language for allotments to the regional education compacts. An update was provided on the selection process for a new auditing firm, indicating that an RFP was sent out, soliciting four responses with one clear front runner. The finance committee plans to bring a recommendation to the board at the February board meeting.

Update: State and Territory Grants

The NC-SARA senior director of finance provided a presentation on SARA State and Territory Grants, which will be posted on the board website. It was noted that in the first three years, the amounts of individual grants to states and territories ranged between \$1250 and \$7500 each. Total awards of \$200,000 in year one with 28 awardees; \$235,000 in year two with 34 awardees; and \$270,000 in year three with 38 awardees. It was further noted that in year three, 13% of the awardees were first-time recipients.

The senior director of finance then provided a short overview of three challenges for the grants program: difficulty accepting grant funds due to perceived liability upon the completion of the grant (Indiana); inability to spend funds on certain expenses due to state spending restrictions, and workarounds involving the regional education compacts (Delaware, SREB); and requests for no-cost extensions, which have been handled case by case and manually but will be moving to the Salesforce platform. The presentation was followed by a short discussion on grant

extensions, noting minimum administrative burden on staff for no-cost extensions.

NC-SARA Statement of Financial Position

The senior director of finance presented the NC-SARA statement of financial position, indicating no significant changes in the first quarter of FY26. It was noted that the market value of the investment portfolio, managed by Charles Schwab and under a relatively conservative allocation strategy, increased during the first quarter. As of September 30, 2025, the short-term portfolio balance was just over \$1.1M, the intermediate term balance was just under \$2.3M, and the long-term balance was just over \$6.6M, with all three portfolios on a growth trajectory.

The treasurer thanked the board for the opportunity to lead the finance committee over the past several years and indicated that he would be passing this responsibility on to board director John Ware moving forward. He then introduced the finance committee report action item on NC-SARA institutional participation fees.

Maintain the current NC-SARA institutional participation fees, with no increase, for the next two years.

(ACTION) The treasurer called for a motion to maintain the current NC-SARA institutional participation fees with no increase for the next two years (2027-2028 fiscal years).

Motion to approve – Finance Committee
Seconded – Terrence Scarborough

All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

Report and Recommendations from the Executive Committee

The board vice chair opened the executive committee report and recommendations session by sharing and reviewing a draft procedure for the board director nominations process, noting that governance and nominating committee would continue to work on this procedure to reflect this year's updates to the process as highlighted by the board. After the updates are completed, an announcement will go out to the full board.

Draft Conflict of Interest Policy

The board vice chair opened a discussion on the draft conflict of interest policy, indicating that some feedback had already been received and additional feedback should be provided to NC-SARA staff to continue developing the policy. A board director provided feedback in three areas: definition of family, how to define financial conflict, and how to determine if a conflict exists. In the following discussion, it was determined that there was a need to define family for purposes of a compensation agreement; that the executive board and general counsel should work together to define financial conflict.

Following the discussion of the conflict of interest policy, the board vice chair introduced the executive committee action item on NC-SARA Bylaws amendments and edits.

Approve the NC-SARA Bylaws amendments and edits.

(ACTION) The board vice chair called for a motion to approve the NC-SARA Bylaws amendment and edits as discussed during the May 2025 board meeting.

Motion to approve – Executive Committee
Seconded – John Cavanaugh

All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

SARA Institutional Closure Working Group Update

The WICHE vice president of policy analysis and research began his update on the activity of the SARA institutional closure. It was noted that over the past year, the working group had set up subgroups to work on three separate issues: teach-out plans and agreements; student records retention; and precipitous closures.

The teach-out plans and agreements subgroup have developed a policy proposal which specifies that institutions that are otherwise required to submit a teach-out plan or agreement to any other entity, also be required to submit that plan to their SPE.

The subgroup on student records retention used a survey to gather information from the SPEs on their existing state policies and approaches. Survey results show that many states have existing policies that cover SARA students. The subgroup is currently working on a policy proposal, balancing the desire for perpetual student access to records with the cost of providing that perpetual access. The group is considering electronic storage and joint purchasing options.

The subgroup on precipitous closures focused on ensuring tuition recovery funds for impacted students. Unlike records retention, state policies on precipitous closure are generally limited to in-state students, so a policy in this space that covers SARA students would be new. It was noted that data demonstrates that this is mostly an issue for non-public institutions, so the subgroup is focusing attention there. Existing state approaches include surety bonds and tuition recovery funds, which could be adapted into a self-funded program with modest fees. It was noted that this would lead to a big increase in fees for non-public institutions and would be a significant issue for the largest 5% of institutions (SNHU, WGU, etc.). The subgroup proposes a hybrid approach with a modest fee for self-funding a tuition protection fund, with an additional requirement for a surety fund for the largest institutions.

The presentation was followed by a vigorous discussion on the precipitous closure issue. It was generally agreed that establishing and administering a tuition recovery fund would be a huge undertaking and might be outside of the NC-SARA mission. Sub-issues that were raised include the continuing role of the U.S. Department of Education in precipitous closures; the inclusion or exclusion of public institutions from a tuition recovery fund; issues of data and fund verification; and current actions of states vs. which gaps should be covered by NC-SARA. The workgroup plans to turn their proposal into a Policy Modification Proposal (PMP) to be reviewed publicly.

The board vice chair called for a break at 10:39 AM ET, indicating that the board would reconvene at 10:51 AM ET to discuss the financial audit and the report from the strategy committee.

Presentation of NC-SARA FY25 Financial Audit

The treasurer resumed the meeting at 10:51 AM ET by introducing Kristin Calder, CPA & Director (Kundinger, Corder, & Montoya) and Nicholas Foose, Auditor (Kundinger, Corder, & Montoya). Nicholas Foose provided a review of the NC-SARA FY25 financial audit and noted that the audit opinion was clean/unmodified. A statement of financial position was presented. Total assets for 2025 were \$17.8M, a year over year increase of \$1.9M from 2024, mainly as a result of a \$752,00 increase from investment income. Liabilities for 2025 totaled \$5.2M, compared to \$4.95M for 2024, with the increase mainly due to deferred revenue from increased fees for participating institutions. In 2025, the change in net assets for was an increase of \$1.6M; revenue totaled \$8.4M and expenses totaled \$7.3M. NC-SARA's programmatic expense ratio has remained at 79% in 2024 and 2025; the goal is to keep this number above 75%. It was noted that the liquidity of NC-SARA represents roughly eight months of operating expenses, with the benchmark for nonprofits being 3-6 months. The firm reiterated that this was a clean audit with no noted concerns. A board director noted a small discrepancy in the footnote numbering, which the auditors indicated they would correct in the final version.

Approve the NC-SARA FY25 Financial Audit

(ACTION) The treasurer called for a motion to approve the FY25 audit as presented, with an edit to the footnotes.

Motion to approve – NC-SARA Finance Committee
Seconded – Michael Thomas

All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

The auditors departed at 11:10 AM ET.

Report from the Strategy Committee

The vice chair of the strategy committee began the committee report by thanking and recognizing the departure of the former strategy committee chair Barbara Gelman-Danley. The work of the strategy committee in the past year has been focused on developing the NC-SARA strategic plan. The committee collected survey information from multiple stakeholder groups (board directors, regional education compact SARA staff, SPEs, SARA participating institutions, and NC-SARA staff) and worked with the organization Peak7 to facilitate listening sessions. Summary survey results were included in the board materials. The committee will work with NC-SARA staff to create a robust outline of the strategic plan this winter, which will be shared at the 2026 May Board Meeting.

The committee has also been working with the board on draft language for a revised mission and vision statement, which they aim to have completed and approved by the board before the October 2026 board meeting.

Motion to approve the NC-SARA Strategy Committee Chair (2026)

(ACTION) The vice chair of the strategy committee called for a motion to approve Carlos Morales as chair of the strategy committee.

Motion to approve – NC-SARA Strategy Committee
Seconded – Sarah Tucker

All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

Report from the Consumer Protection & Policy Committee (CPPC)

The CPPC chair began the committee report with an update on committee composition and continued to describe the committee’s focus on organizing the proposals that will go through the SARA Policy Modification Process (PMP), which will be addressed in the public session.

It was noted that the board directors had requested that the SARA policy and process documents be made much more digestible; this is the focus on the committee’s summary report. The senior director for institutional engagement and initiatives provided a chronological walk-through of the SARA PMP summary, including the total number of proposals submitted, where those submissions came from, the topics of those submissions, and the life cycle of a submitted proposal.

It was noted that just under 100 total comments were received through the two public comment periods, with the vast majority of comments coming from college and university staff. After the amendment and withdrawal period, there were 30 remaining proposals. Nine of the 30 proposals were approved by the regional education compacts via their regional steering committees. An additional 13 were approved by three out of four regional education compacts. Of the eight proposals from 2024 that were resubmitted in 2025, five were approved by all four regional education compacts and will come to the board for approval. The CPPC chair presented new trend data to the board that showed which proposal topics were coming up year after year. In the ensuing discussion, the board vice chair suggested including fiduciary information with each proposal.

The CPPC chair concluded the report with three items for consideration: a request for time for debrief after the public session; the need for new board directors to receive a more in-depth orientation to the SARA PMP process; and the need for the committee to think through how to operationalize both the consumer protection portion and the policy portion of the committee’s charge.

The board vice chair closed the morning session at 12:15 PM ET and dismissed the board for a lunch break.

Federal Updates Discussion

The board vice chair reconvened the meeting at 1:19 PM ET by calling on the NC-SARA senior vice president and general counsel to provide an update on federal actions. The senior vice president and general counsel opened the floor for board directors to share federal updates that would affect SARA directly. A board director noted that the Department of Education (ED) is

preparing to conduct negotiated rulemaking; while rulemaking on accreditation is unlikely to directly impact SARA policy rulemaking on short term Pell Grants may impact SARA institutions who choose to participate, because their non-credit and short-term programs are covered under their SARA agreement.

A board director requested an update on relationship-building with ED, including any follow-up on the letter sent from NC-SARA to ED earlier in the year. The senior vice president and general counsel responded that while there has not been a formal response to the letter, recent confirmations to ED are encouraging in terms of relationships with NC-SARA. It was noted that NC-SARA will need to coordinate with the regional education compact presidents when communicating with ED, since they regularly meet with ED contacts to discuss SARA.

State Policy Updates Discussion

The board vice chair opened the state policy updates discussion by noting that general updates would be followed by a presentation on the Commission for Public Higher Education (CPHE). It was noted that, per a board director's request, state and federal update sessions have been added as standing items on the board agenda. In general updates, it was noted that the bill from California is in suspense, and that Washington continues to have concerns about its continuation with the SARA agreement. A SARA PMP on eligibility requirements (PMP25-0749) was put forward from the western region that may have addressed some of Washington's concerns but did not get approved this cycle. It was noted that state budgets are strained and that this may affect SARA participation.

The board vice chair then called on board director Terrence Scarborough to present an update on CPHE, a new institutional accrediting agency founded by six university systems in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. The board director noted that the rationale for the existence of CPHE is to provide a true peer-to-peer accreditation option that is less expensive, more transparent and streamlined, focused on student outcomes rather than inputs, and does not impose divisive ideological content. The CPHE board is composed of six members, one from each founding system. The agency has had an initial cohort of 10 institutions applying for accreditation. CPHE is waiving fees for initial applicants, as institutions applying for CPHE accreditation will need to maintain accreditation under their current accreditor until CPHE is recognized as an accreditor by ED. CPHE hopes to achieve ED recognition by late 2026 or early 2027.

Board discussion focused on the impact (if any) on SARA. A board director indicated that while there is no immediate talk of creating localized reciprocity agreements among the institutions affiliating with the new Commission, it would be prudent for NC-SARA to keep an eye on potential development in this direction.

Logistics of Public Session

The NC-SARA president began a brief review of the logistics of the public session. Board directors were reminded to situate their name boards upright to request permission to speak, to wait to be called on, to use their microphone and to state their name prior to providing a comment or question. It was noted that the public session would start at 2:00 PM ET, was slated

for an hour and a half, and would follow the traditional protocol. Board directors were requested to log in to the Zoom link specific to the public portion of the meeting.

Welcome to the Public Session

The board vice chair opened the public session of the NC-SARA board meeting at 2:00 PM ET with an introduction and welcome to all 130 members of the public in attendance.

SARA Policy Modification Process: Overview

The board vice chair introduced the NC-SARA senior director of institutional engagement and initiatives to provide an overview of the SARA Policy Modification Process (PMP). The senior director of institutional engagement and initiatives noted that the SARA Policy Modification Process reflects the guiding principles of transparency, collaboration, consistency, and clear and open communication, and that NC-SARA as an organization helps to facilitate the administrative elements of the state driven SARA PMP process, then ensures implementation and education for successful proposals.

SARA Policy Modification Process Implementation Team: 2025 Cycle Reflections

The senior director of institutional engagement and initiatives introduced Sara Appel and Alex Nally as co-chairs of the SARA Policy Modification Process (PMP) Implementation Team to provide their reflections on the 2025 SARA PMP Cycle. The SARA PMP implementation team co-chairs noted that the four regional education compacts, through their regional steering committees (RSCs), have unanimously approved nine SARA policy proposals. The approved proposals focus on student consumer protections specific to teach-out plans, provisional status, student complaints, financial status, and additional measures aligned with regional and national priorities.

The SARA PMP implementation team co-chairs noted that five of the nine approved proposals were originally introduced in the 2024 cycle, where they received three of four regional approvals; after further refinement, they were approved unanimously for the 2025 cycle. It was noted that this is a recurring pattern for SARA PMPs, and that strong regional collaboration for joint refinement of proposals, such as that between MHEC and NEBHE in this cycle, often serves as a predictor of future success. SARA PMP implementation team co-chairs underscored the fact that the SARA policy process is intentionally inclusive, open, and participatory to encourage critical conversations, strengthen collaboration, maintain dialogue, and prompt engagement across the four regions.

SARA Policy Modification Proposals

The nine SARA Policy Modification Proposals that were approved by all four regional education compacts through their RSCs to move forward for a vote of the NC-SARA Board are:

PMP25-0741: Offerings military, language clarification

PMP25-0746: Submitting Teach Out Plans to States

PMP25-0747: 2.5(c) – Process for evaluating new composite scores

PMP25-0750: SPE's Ability to Review a New Institution Applicant
PMP25-0751: Provisional Status Disclosure
PMP25-0752: Consistent use of "Title IV" in the SARA Policy Manual
PMP25-0753: SPE Notification of Changes to FRC Scores
PMP25-0759: 4.5(c) – Where to Submit Student Complaints
PMP25-0766: Provisional Status – Accreditor Sanction

(ACTION) PMP25-0741: Offerings military, language clarification

The board vice chair called for a motion to approve PMP25-0741: Offerings military, language clarification.

Motion to approve – Consumer Protection and Policy Committee
Seconded – Michael Thomas

All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously

(ACTION) PMP25-0746: Submitting Teach Out Plans to States

The board vice chair called for a motion to approve PMP25-0746: Submitting Teach Out Plans to States.

Motion to approve – Consumer Protection and Policy Committee
Seconded – Demi Michelau

All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously

(ACTION) PMP25-0747: 2.5(c) – Process for evaluating new composite scores

The board vice chair called for a motion to approve PMP25-0747: 2.5(c) – Process for evaluating new composite scores.

Motion to approve – Consumer Protection and Policy Committee
Seconded – Michael Thomas

All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously

(ACTION) PMP25-0750: SPE's Ability to Review a New Institution Applicant

The board vice chair called for a motion to approve PMP25-0750: SPE's Ability to Review a New Institution Applicant.

Motion to approve – Consumer Protection and Policy Committee
Seconded – Cam Maeyaert

All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously

(ACTION) PMP25-0751: Provisional Status Disclosure

The board vice chair called for a motion to approve PMP25-0751: Provisional Status Disclosure.

Motion to approve – Consumer Protection and Policy Committee
Seconded – John Cavanaugh

All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously

(ACTION) PMP25-0752: Consistent use of “Title IV” in the SARA Policy Manual

The board vice chair called for a motion to approve PMP25-0752: Consistent use of “Title IV” in the SARA Policy Manual.

Motion to approve – Consumer Protection and Policy Committee
Seconded – Cam Maeyaert

All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously

(ACTION) PMP25-0753: SPE Notification of Changes to FRC Scores

The board vice chair called for a motion to approve PMP25-0753: SPE Notification of Changes to FRC Scores.

Motion to approve – Consumer Protection and Policy Committee
Seconded – Terrence Scarborough

All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously

(ACTION) PMP25-0759: 4.5(c) – Where to Submit Student Complaints

The board vice chair called for a motion to approve PMP25-0759: 4.5(c) – Where to Submit Student Complaints.

Motion to approve – Consumer Protection and Policy Committee
Seconded – Michael Thomas

All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously

(ACTION) PMP25-0766: Provisional Status – Accreditor Sanction

The board vice chair called for a motion to approve PMP25-0766: Provisional Status – Accreditor Sanction.

Motion to approve – Consumer Protection and Policy Committee

Seconded – Susan Heegaard

All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously

Concluding Remarks

The board vice chair reiterated that the role of the board vote on SARA PMP proposals is as the last look to make sure each item is feasible, with the substance of the proposals coming through the states. The board vice chair recognized board director Demi Michelau to provide closing remarks. The board director thanked everyone who played a role in SARA PMP for their engagement, expertise, and commitment to strengthening SARA, and underscored the deliberative approach of careful vetting, broad consultation, and a shared commitment to advancing meaningful and sustainable outcomes as core to developing sound, durable policy. The board director then announced SREB Regional SARA Director Elisa Jaden and Minnesota State Portal Entity and MHEC Regional Steering Committee member Kate McCartan as the co-chairs of the SARA PMP implementation team for the 2026 PMP cycle.

The board vice chair thanked the public for their engagement and closed the public session of the NC-SARA board meeting at 2:45 PM ET.

Consumer Protection and Policy Committee (CPPC) Debrief and Process Implementation Team (PIT) Update

Following a short break, the board vice chair reconvened the NC-SARA board and invited the chair of the CPPC to provide a debrief. The CPPC chair opened the discussion with a request for feedback on this year's pilot process of committee members providing context on the proposals during the public session. A board director noted that the formal presentations from committee members on each proposal were professional and very helpful, providing the audience with an understanding of the depth of thought that went into committee considerations. A board director added that the explanation of individuals, conversations, and methodology involved for each proposal was helpful to show the public that the process was truly a collaborative effort. A board director thanked the committee chair for her work, indicating that the purpose of the presentations was to avoid having the public session just be a series of votes without context.

A board director raised the question of whether the determination of proposals to move forward could be made more compact and less time intensive. The NC-SARA president indicated that the RSCs are working together to think through the process with the intention of easing the burden. The board vice chair emphasized that while efficiency is important, the policy approval process has a dual role: to improve policy, but also to educate the public and ensure transparency. A board director asked about the possibility of pushing the public education purpose more, with the committee providing information publicly about why certain proposals were approved and others were not. The CPPC committee chair responded that it would require a very nuanced narrative, which might be outside of the mission of NC-SARA board.

The CPPC committee chair discussed two ways the board can use trend data to predict the SARA PMPs that will likely come forward in future years. First, the 13 proposals that were approved by three of four regions will likely come up again in the following year. Second, trend data indicates

certain policy areas that have greater SARA PMP interest, including the state renewal timeline, home state definition, field trips, institutional eligibility, provisional status, non-substantive changes, and the SARA PMP process itself (8.2 within the SARA Policy Manual). The CPPC committee chair also noted that there is SARA PMP fatigue from the sheer number of proposals that have been examined in the past three years, and it may be time to do an assessment, clarification, and refinement of the process itself. She then turned the meeting over to the NC-SARA president for the Process Implementation Team (PIT) Update.

The NC-SARA president provided a description of the PIT and its process. The PIT has 30 members from across that country that meet every 6-8 weeks throughout the year. The PIT serves as an advisory body to the PIT Working Group, which is a smaller group made up of the four regional steering committee (RSC) chairs, the two co-chairs of the PMP implementation team, and a few NC-SARA staff. The PIT Working Group meets every two weeks throughout the year, ensuring that everything is running on schedule; when particularly difficult questions arise, those are brought to the larger PIT group. In addition to advising the PIT Working Group, the members of the larger PIT group deliver information out to the RSCs, states, and other colleagues in the larger SARA community.

The NC-SARA president noted that the larger PIT group is creating two SARA working groups: a SARA PMP document process group, and a SARA PMP cycle group. The SARA PMP document process group, led by Alex Nally of Massachusetts, will be working to produce a document that outlines the processes associated with the SARA PMP. The SARA PMP cycle group, led by Sean Seepersad of Connecticut, will be thinking through the SARA PMP process itself, including the timing of the process and which proposals will be reviewed. Any changes that are recommended by the SARA PMP cycle group would be implemented over time and would go through the SARA PMP process.

The CPPC committee chair closed the session by thanking the board for their feedback and emphasizing that the states' primary SARA PMP interest areas are provisional status and eligibility requirements.

NC-SARA President's Report

The NC-SARA president opened her report by thanking the regional education compact presidents, the regional education compact SARA staff, the SPEs, and the RSC chairs for their good work.

NC-SARA's 2025 Annual Data Report

The NC-SARA president noted that NC-SARA is tasked with collecting data from all 2400 SARA participating institutions every year. The data is critical to the SARA community, as well as higher education leaders including the federal Department of Education. Requests for additional data have come from states as well as institutions; the data committee is working on changes to data collection that will be brought to the board at a future date. It was noted that all SARA institutions requested to report this year did report and provided mostly clean data. NC-SARA implemented a new way for institutions to upload data through an online submission page

and an Excel sheet. Fast facts from the year included 2400 SARA institutions reporting, 1.6 million SARA enrollments, and 473,000 out-of-state learning placements (OSLPs).

SARA Cost Savings Report and Calculator – Updated for 2025

The NC-SARA president indicated that the 2025 SARA Cost Savings Report is an update of the 2021 report, both of which were supported by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). These reports aim to demonstrate whether institutions save costs by participating in SARA; both report years have demonstrated significant institutional cost savings in terms of dollars, resources and time. The 2025 report indicates a \$200,000 yearly cost savings per SARA institution, a substantial increase from the 2021 figure of \$70,000 per institution. The increase can be attributed to three factors: inflation; changes in the way states administer state authorization fees; and the financial impact of an increase in the number of programs per institution through state models that charge institutions on a per-program basis. The report demonstrates that participation in SARA provides two main benefits for institutions: it ensures compliance, and it saves them money. Institutions have re-invested these recognized savings in professional licensure, disclosures, student support, and student success efforts.

Both the NC-SARA president and the CPPC committee chair thanked the NC-SARA senior director of research and planning for her incredible work, not only on the national report, but also for collecting and presenting information for each region, as well as for the 30 states that requested state-specific presentations from the data dashboards.

Strategic Communications

The NC-SARA president shared that the board has been working on a strategic communications plan for NC-SARA for the past year, with the aim of setting NC-SARA's own narrative. Through the work of the NC-SARA staff, a blog (SARA, NC-SARA, and SAN) was released in January; the SARA Student Protections document was released in March; the SARA Myth-Busting document was released in June; the Annual Report was released in July; the memo to the Secretary of Education was released in August; the SARA Cost Savings Report was released in September; and the SARA Data Report was released in October. An updated timeline of SARA history will be released in December. In early 2026, the NC-SARA staff will be working on multiple presentations to highlight the value for SARA for states, institutions, and students.

The NC-SARA president highlighted two principles underlying all of NC-SARA's communications work: first, to avoid reacting to critics; and second, for staff to always include the value of SARA for institutions, states, and students at every one of their conference and state meeting presentations. The latter – the larger SARA communications campaign – is taken on not only by NC-SARA staff, but also all SARA regional education compact directors and coordinators.

The NC-SARA president closed the session with a request to the board vice chair to open the Executive Session.

Executive Session

(ACTION) The board vice chair moved to open the Executive Session at 3:58 PM ET.

Motion to approve – Michael Thomas
Seconded – Sarah Tucker

All were in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

The executive session began at 3:58 PM ET with all non-board member attendees excused, with all in agreement.

The topic was personnel matters.

(ACTION) The board vice chair called for a motion to adjourn the executive session.

Motion to adjourn – Michael Thomas
Seconded – Cam Maeyaert

All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 PM ET.

Adjourn

DRAFT

Friday, October 24, 2025

Board Directors (In-Person)

Eduardo Ochoa (Vice Chair)
John Cavanaugh (Treasurer)
Art Coleman
Laurie Dodge
Susan Heegaard
Cam Maeyaert
Demi Michelau
Terrence Scarborough
Michael Thomas
Sarah Armstrong Tucker
John Ware

Board Directors (Virtual)

Coleen Arviso
Lanna Dueck
Carlos Morales
Joan Wodiska

Regional Education Compact Staff & RSC Chairs (In-Person)

Jennifer Armour, MHEC
Susan Heegaard, MHEC
Patrick Lane, WICHE
Jonathan McNicholes, MHEC
Elisa Jaden, SREB
Charlotte Ochs, NEBHE
Kush Patel, NEBHE
Shelley Plutto, WICHE

Sean Seepersad, NEBHE

Regional Education Compact Staff & RSC Chairs (Virtual)

Alicia Armijo, WICHE
Molly Hall-Martin, WICHE

Guests (In-Person)

Alexander Nally

NC-SARA Staff (In-Person)

Jared Abdirkin
Marianne Boeke
Schuyler Dijk
Nick Ortiz
Ashley Rasmussen
Shannon Walker
Jeannie Pauline Yockey-Fine

NC-SARA Staff (Virtual)

Ray Audett
Rachel Christeson
Emma Hidalgo
Sarah Levy

Welcome & Roll Call

Vice Chair Ochoa opened the NC-SARA board meeting at 9:04 AM ET with a welcome to all. The board secretary called roll with all board directors reported as present except Dale Winkler.

Recognition Ceremony

The board vice chair, the NC-SARA president, and other board directors offered thanks on behalf of the full board and the NC-SARA staff for the years of excellent service and engagement to John Cavanaugh, Art Coleman, and Laurie Dodge, as they complete their terms on the NC-SARA board of directors.

Regional Education Compact President Updates

The board vice chair invited the regional education compact presidents and compact staff to provide regional updates and announcements, including a brief review of the SARA work in their region and updates regarding the work of their respective RSCs. The MHEC president and staff provided an update on their SARA PMP review process as well as goal setting for their RSC. The WICHE president and staff provided an update on their engagement with the institutional closure work group, their upcoming compact continuation process, their management of the state SARA renewal process timeline, and the difficult upcoming legislative sessions for their states. In the absence of the SREB president, the SREB RSC chair provided an update on the regional education compact's annual events, state SARA renewals, and educator workforce steering committee; the completion of the work of their commissions on AI and career pathways; and the upcoming election of a vice chair for the RSC. The NEBHE president provided an update on their regional steering committee, institutional budgets and the perceived value of higher education, open educational resources, and the regional interstate tuition exchange program. The board vice chair concluded the session by thanking the regional education compact presenters.

The board vice chair excused all non-board member attendees at 10:00 AM ET and called for a short break, with the meeting to resume in Executive Session.

Executive Session

A facilitated listening session, based on surveys for the planning of the upcoming NC-SARA strategic plan, was conducted.

Adjourn

The board meeting adjourned at 12:30 PM ET.