



San Bernardino County Employees'
Retirement Association

Chief Executive Officer's Report

Date: April 30, 2026

From: Debby Cherney
Chief Executive Officer

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To: SBCERA Trustees

Subject: CEO Report – May 7, 2026 Board Meeting

Administration (Debby Cherney)

This month, we began our tour of visiting with the executive management of our participating employers with a series of in-person employer meetings with the South Coast Air Quality Management District, Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District, and the San Bernardino County Superior Court. These meetings provide a valuable forum to share updates on SBCERA's priorities, funding structure, and available member resources. Equally important, they offer an opportunity to hear directly from employer leadership, helping inform how SBCERA can better support their workforce and strengthen long-term partnerships. Next, we plan to meet with the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority in May.

On April 30, CIO Don Pierce was honored by Markets Group at its Pacific Northwest Institutional Investment Forum in Seattle. Markets' Group Strategy Award honors chief investment officers who have implemented distinct investment approaches that help their funds generate returns in the current economy or have provided stability and strong performance over the past three, five, or 10 years. Investment Committee Chair Jared Newcomer and I both provided remarks to honor Don, followed by a fireside chat between Don and Jason Malinowski, CIO of Seattle City Employees' Retirement System.

Human Resources & Risk Management (Stacey Barnier)

This was a busy and rewarding month for the Human Resources team—and one of our favorites of the year. We were delighted to host our administrative staff for our annual Administrative Professionals' Day breakfast. A cherished tradition, this event featured our homemade oatmeal bar, which continues to be a meaningful way to show appreciation for a group whose impact is felt throughout the entire organization (see photo below).

April is also Stress Awareness Month, a timely reminder to pause and prioritize our health and well-being. As part of our Stress Awareness Month activities, staff participated in National Walking Day on April 1, 2026. Employees enjoyed a 30-minute walk around the SBCERA building—a great opportunity to get some fresh air, stay active, and support overall well-being. In recognition of this, we hosted our annual Sound Bath and Guided Meditation but this year we included some Art Therapy to go along with that in the MPR. Staff enjoyed a restorative experience designed to ease tension, reset energy, and promote mindfulness through calming soundscapes and meditation.

In addition, HR coordinated on-site interviews for the Associate Investment Officer recruitment. While three candidates were originally scheduled, one later withdrew. The on-site process included a practical exercise, a meet-and-greet with staff, and interviews with the Deputy CIO and CEO. We are pleased to

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share that we are currently working through the job offer process with one candidate. More details will be shared once the offer has been accepted and the background check process is complete.

This month, HR also notified staff that the Public Agency Coalition Enterprise (PACE), which administers SBCERA's medical plans, will be conducting a dependent eligibility verification audit across all 34 coalition agencies, including SBCERA, in partnership with Part D Advisors (PDA). These audits are common among public agencies, including CalPERS, and help manage healthcare costs while ensuring the continued delivery of high-quality, competitive, and affordable benefits. Employees enrolled in medical coverage with dependents (Employee + 1 or Employee + Family) will receive a mailed notice and will be required to submit documentation verifying eligibility by May 26, 2026. Employees with Employee Only coverage or those who have opted out of medical coverage are not affected. SBCERA HR maintains strong documentation practices, and no issues are anticipated. Audit results are expected later this year. Additionally, after having served as a non-officer member of the PACE Executive Board since SBCERA joined the JPA in 2024, Stacey has been elected to serve as the Secretary/Treasurer of the PACE Executive Board to fill the vacancy created when Melanie Correa left the Board as a result of her promotion to City Manager of Gustine. Stacey will complete the rest of Melanie's unexpired term ending December 31, 2027.

We are also pleased to welcome Jessica Ocegueda, who joined the Member Services team as an Office Specialist on Monday, April 20, 2026. Jessica previously served as an Office Specialist with the San Bernardino County Tax Collector's Office, and we are excited to have her join the SBCERA team. We hosted additional Office Specialist interviews to help support the Disability Retirement and Survivor Benefits unit. We hope to have a finalist selected for this role in the very near future.



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Investments (Don Pierce)

SBCERA's preliminary March 2026 performance shows a portfolio decline of 1.7%, outperforming its policy index, which fell 3.2%. Fiscal year-to-date returns stand at 4.3%. Markets were broadly challenged during the month amid escalating US–Iran tensions: U.S. equities declined 5%, U.S. bonds fell 1.8%, and international assets dropped 10.8% after earlier strength. Against this backdrop, the portfolio demonstrated resilience, capturing relative downside protection while remaining well positioned to participate in market recoveries.

Member Services (Christina Cintron)

April marked a transition period for the Member Services team as activity levels stabilized following the peak retirement season. Call volumes and retirement application activity returned to typical post–busy season levels, allowing the team to maintain consistent coverage across all service channels while shifting focus toward longer-term operational priorities. Throughout the month, the team continued to support members through in-person, phone, and virtual interactions, maintaining a high level of service while adapting to a more balanced workload.

With capacity returning, the team made meaningful progress in several areas identified for improvement, with a focus on enhancing efficiency and the overall member experience. Notably, the Retirement Consultation checklist was updated to align with the flow of the Group Consultation video currently in development with the Communications team. This effort supports greater consistency in how retirement information is delivered and helps ensure a more standardized counseling experience across all service channels. In addition, the team is nearing implementation of TimeTap, a new online self-scheduling tool that will allow members to book appointments at any time of day. While members may continue to schedule appointments by phone, this new option will provide increased flexibility for those who prefer to schedule outside of regular business hours.

April also included important planning efforts to support upcoming operational changes. The team welcomed Jessica Ocegueda, who joined Member Services as an Office Specialist. Jessica brings prior experience from the San Bernardino County Tax Collector's Office, where she provided direct support to taxpayers through both in-person and phone interactions, along with a strong foundation in customer service. Her addition strengthens the team's overall service capacity and supports our continued focus on delivering a superior member experience. In addition, coordination is underway for the relocation of the Member Services team from the third floor to the first-floor suite in May. This move is intended to enhance accessibility and further support an efficient and member-focused service environment.

Overall, the Member Services team demonstrated strong adaptability in transitioning from peak-season demand to a more balanced operational environment. By maintaining service consistency while advancing key initiatives, the team continues to support SBCERA's commitment to Operational Excellence and Efficiency and a Superior Service Experience.

Communications & Stakeholder Relations (Olivia Applegate)

This period focused on expanding member education, strengthening employer and stakeholder engagement, and advancing key communications initiatives. Highlights include a high-attendance retirement webinar, continued development of on-demand educational tools, progress on important video projects, and active monitoring of legislation impacting public pension systems. Please refer to Chief Counsel Barbara Hannah's report for more information on the legislative

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Member Engagement & Education

We hosted a retirement webinar in partnership with San Bernardino County, with more than 120 members in attendance. Led by Senior Communications Specialist Jalel Braden and Retirement Specialist Cara Larsen, the session reflected the success of SBCERA's updated seminar approach and provided members with opportunities for live Q&A and deeper engagement. Additional seminar dates are being promoted via email and are available on the SBCERA website.

We also delivered a Retirement Overview presentation to nearly 100 members at South Coast Air Quality Management District. The session is part of their ongoing efforts to ensure that new employees, as well as those who are mid-career or approaching retirement are well informed about their SBCERA retirement benefits. We greatly appreciate the continued opportunity to support and educate our members.

Development of a new Retirement Consultation video is wrapping up and will soon be live. Designed to mirror the flow of a standard consultation, this resource will support both group sessions and self-paced member learning. The video is expected to improve consistency, efficiency, and accessibility in the retirement planning process.

Expanding access to retirement education improves member readiness, increases engagement with SBCERA resources, and supports more informed decision-making across all career stages. These efforts also strengthen relationships with employers and position SBCERA as a trusted source of retirement guidance.

"Invested in Your Future" Video Update

Production is underway on an updated version of the Invested in Your Future video in collaboration with Post and Jam. The refreshed content will highlight SBCERA's governance structure, investment strategy, and diversification approach. The video is scheduled to debut at the upcoming Employer Forum on June 10.

Fiscal Services (Amy McInerney)

During the month of April, Fiscal Services continued to advance key initiatives aligned with SBCERA's strategic priorities of Operational Excellence & Efficiency, Superior Service Experience, Prudent Fiscal Management, and Effective Communications.

A significant milestone this month was the implementation of the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). SBCERA successfully applied a 2% COLA to all eligible benefits for the April 30 payment, resulting in an approximate \$1.5 million increase in monthly benefit payments. This effort reflects both Operational Excellence & Efficiency in execution and SBCERA's commitment to providing a Superior Service Experience to members. Additional retirements processed in late April and throughout May will continue to reflect this adjustment, as eligible members must have retired by April 1, 2026, to receive the increase. As is typical during this period, staff experienced a seasonal increase in retirement activity and worked diligently to ensure timely setup of initial benefit payments.

Work also progressed on the Employer Reporting Initiative, a key component of strengthening data accuracy, cybersecurity, and reporting consistency. Throughout April, staff conducted multiple group trainings, individual employer sessions, and targeted outreach meetings to support implementation of standardized file formats and secure data submission through the employer portal. These efforts demonstrate SBCERA's focus on Operational Excellence & Efficiency while reinforcing Effective Communications with participating employers. Additional live training opportunities are planned for the upcoming Employer Forum in June.

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In support of Prudent Fiscal Management, staff continued development of the annual budget, which remains on track for presentation to the Administration Committee in May and the Board in June.

Additionally, SBCERA received the Agreed-Upon Procedures (AUP) report from the independent auditors, an important component of financial oversight and transparency. The two areas selected for review through this process were the Investment Program and Retirement Benefit Payments and Refunds. This report will be formally presented at the June Audit Committee meeting.

Fiscal Services also expanded employer engagement through presentations to several of SBCERA's participating employers, covering retirement system fundamentals, investment strategies, actuarial concepts, and GASB 68 reporting, including the Net Pension Liability. These outreach efforts support Effective Communications and enhance employer understanding of SBCERA's operations and financial framework.

Overall, the month of April reflects continued progress across multiple priorities, with a strong emphasis on accuracy, service, transparency, and collaboration.

Information Services (Joe Michael)

Information Services and Facilities continued to make strong progress throughout April on several key initiatives supporting SBCERA's operational and infrastructure priorities.

Facilities work remained a primary focus, with multiple tenant improvement projects advancing across the building. Construction activities in areas such as the reception breakroom, Communications media space, and Print/Mail Center progressed steadily, along with continued work on the new Member Services suite. These efforts are part of a broader initiative to modernize workspaces, improve functionality, and support evolving operational needs. Projects remain on schedule, with substantial completion anticipated in the near term, followed by final phases of tenant improvements for building partners.

On the technology front, the Department continued to advance system enhancements and infrastructure improvements. Testing progressed on the latest Pension Administration System updates, with the majority of enhancements successfully validated and remaining items undergoing final review and refinement. In parallel, work continued to migrate and optimize system components within updated infrastructure, supporting improved performance, reliability, and security.

The Department also continued to expand and refine newly implemented tools aimed at improving internal operations and staff productivity. This includes the phased rollout of an automated meeting documentation solution and ongoing stabilization of recently deployed systems. These efforts are focused on enhancing service delivery, improving access to information, and supporting more efficient day-to-day operations across the organization.

Overall, April activities reflect continued progress in strengthening SBCERA's facilities, modernizing technology systems, and positioning the organization for sustained operational efficiency and long-term success.

Legal, Disabilities & Survivor Benefits (Barbara Hannah)

PRA Requests Summary

On April 23, 2026, SBCERA provided a follow-up response to a California Public Records Act ("PRA") request from Open the Books seeking wage information for SBCERA's active and retired members. In the response, SBCERA produced complete, disclosable wage information verified by the Member Services.

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On April 28, 2026, SBCERA responded to an additional PRA request from Mr. Patrick Clarke of Dickinson Wright seeking contracts and related records concerning the procurement of services for SBCERA's Member Portal or agency website. SBCERA identified and produced available, disclosable materials, including one 2019 solicitation document, staff report to the Board, and final contract. SBCERA further advised the requester that certain unsuccessful proposals are no longer in its possession, as they were disposed of in accordance with its established records retention schedule.

Important Upcoming Dates – Training Opportunities

Date	Description	Location	Comments
May 12-15, 2026	SACRS Spring Conference	Olympic Valley, CA	Pre-Authorized
May 13-14, 2026	II AlphaEdge North America	Fort Lauderdale, FL	Pre-Authorized (up to 2 per year)
May 16-17, 2026	NCPERS Accredited Fiduciary Program (NAF)	Las Vegas, NV	Pre-Authorized
May 16-17, 2026	NCPERS Trustee Educational Seminar (TEDS)	Las Vegas, NV	Pre-Authorized
May 17-20, 2026	NCPERS Annual Conference (ACE)	Las Vegas, NV	Pre-Authorized
May 21, 2026	SBCERA Administrative Committee	SBCERA	N/A
May 21, 2026	SBCERA Investment Committee	SBCERA	N/A
May 26, 2026	SBCERA Executive Committee	SBCERA	N/A
May 28, 2026	Portfolio Summit – Southeast LP Summit	Atlanta, GA	Requires advance Board approval
May 29, 2026	CALAPRS Trustees Roundtable	Virtual	Pre-Authorized
Jun 1-3, 2026	II Endowments & Foundation Roundtable East	Boston, MA	Pre-Authorized (up to 2 per year)
Jun 4, 2026	SBCERA Board Meeting	SBCERA	N/A
Jun 10, 2026	SBCERA Employer Forum	SBCERA	N/A
Jun 11, 2026	SBCERA Investment Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Jun 13-14, 2026	IFEBP Trustees Institute: Level II – Concepts in Practice	San Diego, CA	Pre-Authorized (up to 2 per year)
Jun 15-17, 2026	IFEBP Advanced Trustees & Administrators Institute	San Diego, CA	Pre-Authorized (up to 2 per year)
Jun 15-17, 2026	IFEBP New Trustees Institute: Level I – Core Concepts	San Diego, CA	Pre-Authorized (up to 2 per year)
Jun 18, 2026	SBCERA Administrative Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Jun 18, 2026	SBCERA Audit Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Jun 27-30, 2026	GFOA Annual Conference	Chicago, IL	Requires advance Board approval
Jul 2, 2026	SBCERA Board Meeting	SBCERA	N/A
Jul 9, 2026	SBCERA Investment Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Jul 16, 2026	SBCERA Administrative Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Jul 13-15, 2026	With Intelligence (formally Pension Bridge) Private Equity Exclusive	Chicago, IL	Pre-Authorized (up to 2 per year)
Aug 6, 2026	SBCERA Board Meeting	SBCERA	N/A
Aug 13, 2026	SBCERA Investment Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Aug 20, 2026	SBCERA Administrative Committee	SBCERA	N/A

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Date	Description	Location	Comments
Aug 24-27, 2026	CALAPRS Principles of Pension Governance for Trustees	Santa Barbara, CA	Pre-Authorized
Aug 16-18, 2026	NCPERS Public Pension Funding Forum	Chicago, IL	Pre-Authorized
Sep 3, 2026	SBCERA Board Meeting	SBCERA	N/A
Sep 16-18, 2026	SBCERA Investment Forum	Lake Arrowhead, CA	N/A
Sep 22-25, 2026	IDAC Global Summit	Newport Beach, CA	Requires advance Board approval
Sep 23-25, 2026	NCPERS Public Pension HR Summit	TBD	Pre-Authorized
Sep 29-Oct 2, 2026	CII Fall Conference	Boston, MA	Requires advance Board approval (up to 2 per year)
Oct 1, 2026	SBCERA Board Meeting	SBCERA	N/A
Oct 8, 2026	SBCERA Investment Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Oct 15, 2026	SBCERA Administrative Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Oct 24-25, 2026	NCPERS Accredited Fiduciary (NAF) Program	Nashville, TN	Pre-Authorized
Oct 24-25, 2026	NCPERS Program for Advanced Trustee Studies (PATS)	Nashville, TN	Pre-Authorized
Oct 25-28, 2026	NCPERS Public Safety Conference	Nashville, TN	Pre-Authorized
Nov 5, 2026	SBCERA Board Meeting	SBCERA	N/A
Nov 10-13, 2026	SACRS Fall Conference	Rancho Mirage, CA	Pre-Authorized
Nov 17, 2026	SBCERA Audit Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Nov 19, 2026	SBCERA Administrative Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Nov 19, 2026	SBCERA Investment Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Dec 3, 2026	SBCERA Board Meeting	SBCERA	N/A
Dec 10, 2026	SBCERA Investment Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Dec 17, 2026	SBCERA Administrative Committee	SBCERA	N/A

Trustees wishing to attend any of the upcoming trainings should contact Christa James for travel and registration, or to make arrangements for meetings that need approval to be included with the upcoming Board agenda.