

Southwest Arkansas Education Cooperative Board's Minutes

April 17, 2025

Schools Present: Prescott, Texarkana, Hope, Nevada, Spring Hill Proxy-Ronald Smead, Lafayette County Proxy- Harvey Sellers, Blevins proxy- Kris Woodruff

Schools Not Present: Fouke, Genoa Central

Co-op Staff Present: Phoebe Bailey, Monica Morris, Gina Perkins, Jenny Smead, David Hampton, Jessica Dearing, Shannon Puckett

The meeting was called to order by Phoebe Bailey.

Lloyd Jackson made a motion to approve the minutes from March. Robert Poole seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Robert Poole made a motion to approve the financial and expenditure reports from March. The motion was seconded by Lloyd Jackson. The motion was approved.

Personnel- Ms. Bailey presented a handout with a proposed list of employees for the 2025-26 school year. Roy McCoy made a motion to approve the list as presented. The motion was seconded by Robert Poole. The motion was approved.

Legislative Updates- Ms. Bailey shared a list of legislative updates since the last board meeting. There was discussion among the districts about Act 1866 and how districts plan on budgeting for that. There was also discussion about the letter grades that were sent out this week and how they felt about the new system.

Mental Health-Jessica Dearing- SWAEC finished year two of a five year grant in December. We currently have 7 mental health providers. One of the goals of this department is to not only provide superior mental health support but also grow licensed mental health professionals. Mrs. Dearing went over the referral numbers they are receiving from the districts and the services they are providing.

Teacher Center Updates- Monica Morris-

Professional Development- Mrs. Morris spoke about the upcoming summer PD and the timelines for offerings, the Professional Learning Spreadsheet, DESE Offerings, and the Teach Southwest Conference.

Letter Grades- grades were released to the superintendents on April 15th. Letter grades for 24-25 will be issued October 2025.

Accountability- Ms. Morris linked in her notes the DESE accountability webpage that shows how letter grades are calculated.

ATLAS- there is a training test for students to practice procedures for testing. Ms. Morris reminded districts that K-3 summative screeners are required.

Apprenticeship- registered apprenticeship SPED applications will be accepted through May 16. This is a 3 year competency based apprenticeship. LIC-25-019.

Cycle 7- there will be SPED reporting guidance web conferences. Mrs. Morris has linked these in her notes.

Student Success Plans- the office of school counseling is looking for districts interested in piloting Arkansas Launch. Full implementation is set for August 2026. Mrs. Morris has linked the contact information in her notes.

District Reporting- intervention reporting will be submitted in cycle 7 this year. Starting 25-26, it will be submitted in cycle 4 and 7.

Commissioner's Memos- LIC-25-007- ArPep applications are open until June 30.
LIC-25-009- roster verification is open April 14-May 16.

Mrs. Morris reminded the districts about the satisfaction survey that was sent out. She encouraged all staff of the districts to fill this out.

Director Updates- Phoebe Bailey

- There have been numerous education related executive orders, administrative actions, and legal developments recently. All of these can be found on the Executive Actions Chart that is linked in Ms. Bailey's notes.
- Ms. Bailey shared a link for Amergis. They help with subs and long term placement for teachers.
- The Education Department ended ESSER late liquidation after many states had received pre-approval from the Biden administration. The one-page letter did offer states an opportunity to continue to extend spending by reapplying for Education Department approvals on a per-contract basis. DESE is currently working on submitting documentation to reinstate some of the funds.
- Ms Bailey also highlighted a few of our AEPA vendors and talked about what products and services they provide.

A few representatives from the Kids First Education Company came in to discuss the products and services that they can provide to school districts.

Ms. Bailey shared a link to the Educator Effectiveness System. This is where districts can gain access to those on the list for merit pay. Administrators need to check this to make sure everything is correct. There will be one pull for this on May 1st.

With no further business, a motion was made by Robert Poole to adjourn. Lloyd Jackson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.