

Southwest Arkansas Education Cooperative Board's Minutes December 17, 2025 held at Fouke School District Performing Arts Center

Schools Present: Hope, Texarkana, Fouke, Genoa, Lafayette, Prescott, Nevada, Blevins proxy-Kimberly Turner

Schools Not Present: Spring Hill

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

Guest Present: Larry Smith-incoming Prescott Superintendent

The meeting was called to order by Jonathan Crossley.

Jon Estes made a motion to approve the minutes from November. Roy McCoy seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Lloyd Jackson made a motion to approve the financial and expenditure reports from November. The motion was seconded by Bradley Wright. The motion was approved.

Fouke School District Presentation- Prior to the meeting, Dr. Buie led the board on a tour of the performing arts center, highlighting both past and upcoming student performances. During the visit, the board had the opportunity to enjoy a live performance by the high school jazz band, which showcased the students' musical talents.

AEPA- Ms. Bailey presented a list of vendors with the recommendation to extend/renew an AEPA contract. Jon Estes made a motion to approve the proposed vendors. The motion was seconded by Angie Bryant. The motion was approved.

Mental Health Grant- There are two different scenarios in play at this point with the mental health team. Ms. Bailey has written another SBMH federal grant to continue our current services through SWAEC for 4 more years. We will know the results by the end of the month. SWAEC has also formed a partnership with PsychPlus. This group is a partner of AESA and will contract with our current staff to continue services in our schools at no cost to the district.

Letter Grade- Ms. Bailey presented a handout detailing each district and the letter grades assigned to each district and to each building. She also discussed the steps that need to be taken moving forward. There was extensive discussion among the districts regarding what is working well and what is not working within their schools.

Teacher Center Updates- Monica Morris

Master Schedule Session- This training will be January 21. Ms. Morris has shared the registration link in her notes.

Literacy K-2- This guidance has been approved. This assesses all K-2 students BOY, EOY and MOY, if indicated. The notes also include information on screening area(s) for K-3 students..

Student Success Plan- The Office of School Counseling is actively working with pilot schools in the state that are participating in LAUNCH for Students (LFS) during the 2025–2026 school year. LFS will serve as a centralized and streamlined platform for managing Student Success Plans, with statewide implementation planned for August, 2026. Districts are encouraged to ensure that all student and staff emails are entered in eSchool. Additionally, it is important to assign roles for counselors and advisors within eSchool.

Foundations of Reading- The last chance for free testing is December 31.

Teacher Growth Data- There was a commissioner's memo released on this and is included in the notes. There will be a webinar concerning this on January 13.

Ms. Morris provided an update on behalf of Yamicii Wilson, the SWAEC Math Specialist, regarding upcoming professional development opportunities. The state is offering virtual training sessions in collaboration with Attuned and SchoolKit, specifically designed to support Algebra 1 educators. Due to limited availability, early registration is highly encouraged. For additional details or to register, please contact Ms. Wilson directly.

Director Updates- Phoebe Bailey

Ms. Bailey shared federal updates with the board. These included the following:

- The House passed the Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act, which reauthorizes the program for FY26.
- The feds are now rolling out “Make America Healthy Again” so be on the look out for a shift on guidance for foodservice.
- The Trump administration has indicated a willingness to entertain expanded waivers of certain requirements under ESEA. To date, Iowa and Indiana have both submitted waiver requests to the Secretary which are expected to set a precedent for the scope of future waivers granted to other states.
- The Supreme Court on December 8 refused to hear a Texas case that could have decided the constitutionality of book bans in public libraries. In doing so, the justices left in place a lower court ruling allowing state and local governments to make decisions on book bans.
- The Supreme Court ordered a federal appeals court to reconsider its decision to uphold a New York state law that eliminates religious exemptions for required school vaccinations. The justices asked the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit, in New York City, to give the case a second look.

The next board meeting will be held at Hope School District on January 15th.

Ms Bailey stated that she will send out the director evaluations forms after Christmas break.

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