

**Southwest Arkansas Education Cooperative Board's Minutes
October 17, 2024**

Schools Present: Genoa Central, Prescott, Spring Hill, Lafayette County, Texarkana

Schools Not Present: Fouke, Blevins, Nevada, Hope

Co-op Staff Present: Phoebe Bailey, Monica Morris, Jenny Smead, David Hampton, Vicki Jewell, Chad Morris, Angie Gentry

Guest Present: Karli Saracini- Asst. Commissioner, Sharlee Crowson-Ed. Workforce Data Manager

The meeting was called to order by Phoebe Bailey.

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

Peter Maggio made a motion to approve the financial and expenditure reports from September. The motion was seconded by Lloyd Jackson. The motion was approved.

Personnel- Ms. Bailey recommended that we accept the resignation of Carina Martinez. A motion was made by Robert Poole to accept the resignation. The motion was seconded by Peter Maggio. The motion was approved.

Student Enrichment Specialist- Chad Morris presented a handout with upcoming dates for student enrichment events that are being offered. He stated the goals of these events are to extend standards beyond the classroom and emphasize problem solving.

Novice Teacher Updates- Vickie Jewell shared a presentation on beginning of the year novice teacher data. It contains the data that was obtained from the Fall 2024 survey. She also listed recommendations on how to address some of the concerns that the novice teachers have. Vicki will be sending out another survey in the spring. She is hoping to receive at least 85% of these back.

Director Updates- Phoebe Bailey

Education Freedom Account Update- The EFA program has reached its capacity for the 2024-25 school year, though applications remain open. The capacity of the program for this school year was set at 3% of the total public school student population for the state in 2022-2023. The department has left applications open and encourages families to apply to be added to a waiting list.

State Board Update- Secretary Oliva suggested a possible change in the law to require F graded schools to operate five days a week and that state aid be reduced to those schools that don't have 178 day school calendars.

Title IX- The Biden administration issued rules that dictate how schools should respond to these cases. The new rules took effect August 1. Federal courts granted injunctions blocking enforcement of this in some states. The states that are under litigations are still following the rules that were published in 2020.

Title VI- In May 2024, OCR issued a DCL (Dear Colleague Letter) to provide information about federal civil rights obligations of school districts regarding nondiscrimination. These protections extend to students and school community members who are perceived because of their shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics.

Student Absenteeism- IES has created four links that discuss research findings and tools that educators and policymakers can use to improve student attendance and engagement. These are linked in the google folder.

Mental Health Updates- The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has issued four new resources for schools, stakeholders, students with disabilities, and their families. These documents outline the rights of students with mental health disabilities and the responsibilities of elementary and secondary schools, as well as colleges and universities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. These were attached in the google folder.

Dr. Saunders will be here on January 15, 2025 for a budget meeting. Due to this, Ms. Bailey suggested that we move the January board meeting to this same date.

Teacher Center Updates- Monica Morris

Math Intervention Plan- Monica listed links to math intervention plans for grades 3-8. These are in the google folder.

Individual Reading Plans- plans will populate in the ATLAS portal. Reading plans are based on the K-3 screener. There will be a guidance document coming out soon.

Standards for Accreditation- The Standards for Accreditation Tool opened on October 1. This spreadsheet provides details about standards and website checklist. Districts will receive monthly Standards for Accreditation exception snapshots on the 21st of each month. Failure to address corrective actions may lead to citation monitoring.

Assessment- ATLAS 3-12 data sessions will be held at SWAEC on October 22.

Mental Health Series- As discussed last month, SWAEC is providing access to all school districts on mental health topic sessions. Monica stated that she has been in contact with all the district's community outreach persons concerning this. There is a monthly flyer that she is asking the districts to share each month that will contain information for all the upcoming sessions.

Stronger Connections Mini Grant- COM-25-023- if awarded this, you will receive \$55,000 that can be used for anything in the school safety plan.

Karli Saracini- DESE Updates - Karli went over information concerning merit pay and the factors that play into that. She had a slide presentation that was shared in the google folder with all districts. There were a lot of questions and discussions between Karli and the districts that were present.

With no further business, a motion was made by Lloyd Jackson to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Opal Anderson. The meeting was adjourned.

