

Southwest Arkansas Education Cooperative Board's Minutes August 21, 2025

Schools Present: Hope, Texarkana, Spring Hill Proxy- Peter Maggio, Prescott, Genoa, Lafayette, Nevada

Schools Not Present: Blevins, Fouke

Co-op Staff Present: Phoebe Bailey, Monica Morris, Gina Perkins, Jenny Smead, David Hampton, Hannah Ward, Shannon Puckett, Jamie Friday

Guest Present: Dennis Copeland-AR Rural Ed

The meeting was called to order by Jonathan Crossley.

Lloyd Jackson made a motion to approve the minutes from June & July. Peter Maggio seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Peter Maggio made a motion to approve the financial and expenditure reports from June & July. The motion was seconded by Bradley Wright. The motion was approved.

AR Rural Ed- Dennis Copeland attended the meeting to provide updates and discuss upcoming events related to rural education. He announced that the Fall Conference will be held on November 3 in Hot Springs. Mr. Copeland also shared information about several scholarships that were awarded over the past year. He encouraged anyone needing assistance to reach out to him directly. A brief discussion followed between Mr. Copeland and the superintendents, during which several questions were addressed.

Ms. Bailey informed the group of a vacancy on the Arkansas Rural Education Board and noted that an election would be necessary to fill the position. After some discussion, Lloyd Jackson made a motion to elect Roy McCoy. The motion was seconded by Peter Maggio and approved unanimously.

Personnel- Ms. Bailey presented a personnel slate with recommendations for hire. Peter Maggio made a motion to approve the slate as presented. The motion was seconded by Roy McCoy. The motion was approved.

Business Community Approval Plan- David Hampton briefly reviewed the SWAEC Business Continuity Plan, which had been shared with the districts via Google Drive. Peter Maggio made a motion to approve the plan. The motion was seconded by Angie Bryant and approved unanimously.

David Hampton provided an overview of current cybersecurity laws and shared information about upcoming updates. He urged districts to ensure compliance with existing requirements and encouraged them to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Teacher Center Updates- Monica Morris

Third Grade Promotion- Beginning with the 2025–2026 school year, third grade students must meet the state's minimum reading standard or qualify for a good cause exemption in order to be promoted to fourth grade. A webinar covering this information will be held on August 29 from 10:00–11:00 a.m.

High Impact Tutoring- Applications are now open and are due by September 12. For questions regarding the application process or program requirements, please contact ade.tutoring@ade.arkansas.gov.

Statement of Assurance- This is required to be uploaded to the SFA system by September 1. Mrs. Morris has linked the checklist in her notes.

Assessment- The correction engine will close on Friday, August 22. Superintendents are required to log in and certify their district data before the deadline.

Annual Ratings- Everyone will be required to have an annual rating. This is a formative or summative rating given at the end of each school year and reported in EES.

Teacher Licensure Plans- Effective the 2025–2026 school year, and in accordance with Act 304, licensure waivers will no longer be available to public school districts or charter schools. This includes the phasing out of Act 1240 waivers, School of Innovation waivers, and Emergency teaching permits. These will be replaced by Teacher Licensure Plans. Under the new requirements, teachers will have three years to obtain a provisional license, followed by two years to earn a standard license.

CTE Grants- There are four of these listed in commissioner's memo CTE-26-001.

Accelerated Reading-Concurrent Credit- There is a webinar on August 21 at 2:00 for school leaders. There is also one August 22 for school counselors.

School Safety Survey- This process is designed to identify how schools are implementing legislatively mandated school safety requirements. Forms will be emailed to each superintendent and need to be submitted by September 9.

Street Smart Curriculum- This program is designed to educate students in grades 6–8 about road safety covering roles as drivers, passengers, and pedestrians. Mrs. Morris has provided a link to the program website in her notes for further reference.

ArPEP Late Cohort- The deadline for this program is August 31. The next cohort will begin in Summer 2026, with the application window opening on March 1, 2026.

Director Updates- Phoebe Bailey

Ms. Bailey distributed proxy forms and requested that districts complete and return them as soon as possible.

Ms. Bailey shared a document in the google drive related to teacher growth score data and demonstrated how to navigate LEA Insights to access the necessary information.

Federal and State Updates

- Grant funding will be allocated to co-ops to support delivery of professions learning tailored to the needs of stakeholders in our regions regarding English learning.

- The Arkansas School Board Association provides guidance on the election timeline for boards in accordance with Act 503. Ms. Bailey has included a link to this guidance in her notes.
- Dr. Brandi Benton started Monday, August 18th as the new Assistant Commissioner for the Educator Effectiveness and Licensure division for DESE.

More Director Updates

Ms. Bailey reported that she is still working on securing grant funding to support the mental health group. She is exploring various avenues to ensure this service can continue for our schools.

Ms. Bailey provided an update on AEPA, including the revenue generated to date. She also shared that TIPS/TAPS will not be renewing their contract with Dawson Co-op and all sales will be from Texas. .

Jonathan Crossley shared that he had spoken with most of the superintendents about rotating the monthly board meetings to a different district each month. He encouraged each district to give a brief presentation highlighting things going on within their schools. The goal is to increase engagement and promote the sharing of ideas among districts. A proposed schedule has been created and shared with all districts.

There was discussion about the possibility of organizing a board retreat in the future. Board members considered the best time of year and potential locations for the retreat. Further discussion and planning will take place at a later date.

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