

## **Southwest Arkansas Education Cooperative Board's Minutes November 21, 2024**

**Schools Present:** Lafayette Proxy- Harvey Sellers, Hope, Prescott Proxy- Angie Bryant, Nevada, Spring Hill Proxy- Ronald Smead, Texarkana Proxy- Gwen Adams

**Schools Not Present:** Fouke, Genoa, Blevins

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

**Guest Present:** Leigh Quillin- Dean of Enrollment Management at UAHT.

The meeting was called to order by Jonathan Crossley.

Roy McCoy made a motion to approve the minutes from October. Harvey Sellers seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Roy McCoy made a motion to approve the financial and expenditure reports from October. The motion was seconded by Angie Bryant . The motion was approved.

**Personnel-** Ms. Bailey recommended that we accept the resignation of Kristen Sorrells as ECH Teacher. A motion was made by Harvey Sellers to accept the resignation. The motion was seconded by Roy McCoy. The motion was approved.

**Career Coaches-** Leigh Quillin talked about the partnership that UAHT is extending to schools to employ career coaches. She shared the benefits a career coach can bring to districts. She asked that anyone with questions or interested in this opportunity, please contact her at UAHT.

**Perkins-** Shannon Puckett went over CTE Funding and programs that are currently being offered. She mentioned the Be Pro Be Proud's Draft Day coming up on April 8 at UAHT. These events match regional employers with graduating seniors for in person interviews while providing a career expo for underclassmen.

**Data Update K-3 Math & Reading-** Ms. Bailey shared data from the beginning of the year screener assessments given in grades K-3 in literacy and K-2 in math. This screener is given within the first 30 days of school. The purpose of the screener is to identify students who need additional testing to determine where they may benefit from additional support and provide their teacher with the information necessary to help them grow. Each district received a handout with their data and a comparison to state screener data.

**School Support Dashboard Data-** this information is located on the SWAEC website. It will show how often our specialists are visiting school districts.

### **Teacher Center Updates- Monica Morris**

**K-2 Interim Window Change-** this was scheduled for November 18 but has been changed to January 13 - February 21, 2025.

**Educator Effectiveness-** there will be 2 sessions held in January for master scheduling. Ms. Morris will be sharing all of this information with the principals.

**AR App-** DESE has approved AR Apps for the 2024-25 school year. Districts should have the Strategic Plan based on this app posted on their website. The due date was November 8.

**Special Education- Testing-out Option-** details are forthcoming. There is an apprenticeship model for paraprofessionals who hold a Bachelor's Degree. They can work as a para while completing coursework to be a licensed special education teacher. This will take 3 years to complete.

**Budget Prep Session-** SWAEC will host this on January 14 from 1:00-3:00. This is open to superintendents and business managers. The January board meeting will be held the morning of the 14th.

**Mental Health Series-** Ms. Morris shared the December flyer for the mental health series. This is free to our districts

**Success Ready Pathways Webinar-** this will be December 11 from 10:00-11:00. Ms. Morris has linked the registration link in her notes in the google folder.

**School-Based Health Center Informational Webinar-** This will be December 11 from 9:00-10:00. Ms. Morris has linked the registration link in her notes in the google folder.

**Professional Learning Grant Opportunity-** COM-25-029- All public schools may apply for funding to improve academic outcomes. This funding is to support the implementation of Arkansas LEARNS through PLC. Deadline for this is January 31. Please let Phoebe or Monica know if you are interested in a consortium or if you need any support with your plan.

**21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant-** The 2025 Cohort will be provided a 4-year grant to support the creation or expansion of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The deadline is December 20.

### **Director Updates- Phoebe Bailey**

**School Start Date-** schools will have the same flexibility as last year.

**Education Committees-** Ms. Bailey provided a list of senators and representatives that make up these committees.

**Assessment Updates-** Do not anticipate letter grades releasing until after the first of the year. Late January or early February, DESE will begin standard setting work for the new accountability formula with a committee of 30 people from around the state. DESE cannot authorize a pause in letter grades. That would take legislative action.

### **Federal Updates**

**Funding-** it is expected that the FY25 levels may not be finalized until the spring.

**Vouchers-** We expect that there will be an aggressive push to also enable 529 accounts to be used for homeschooling expenses.

**E-Rate-** there is an effort to support the case for E-Rate, looking to protect and preserve the USF programs, given the critical role they play in ensuring access to connectivity.

**Dept. of Education-** there is expressed desire by President Trump to eliminate the U.S. Department of Education. At this time AESA urges educational leaders to maintain a healthy sense of skepticism that the U.S. Department of Education will be eliminated since there are no concrete proposals in Congress to eliminate it, delegate the funding and hundreds of responsibilities that the Department has to other agencies, or to change any of the funding streams that the U.S. Department of Education manages.

**AI Toolkit-** USED released an “Empowering Education Leaders” toolkit, which offers guidance to support the intentional use of AI in education across ten modules, including categories such as federal policies, privacy, data security, civil rights, and digital equity.

Vicki Jewell announced a few awards for special effort and work by several of our novice teachers and novice mentors.

With no further business, a motion was made by Roy McCoy to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Angie Bryant. The meeting was adjourned.