**Southwest Arkansas Education Cooperative Board’s Minutes
October 14, 2021**

**Schools Present:** Genoa, Fouke, Hope, Texarkana, Nevada, Prescott Proxy- Jay Turley, Lafayette, and Blevins.

**Schools Not Present**: Spring Hill

**Co-op Staff Present:** Phoebe Bailey, Monica Morris, Eva Wood, Gina Perkins, Tanya Collins, Vicki Jewell.

**Guests Present:** Dr.Mike Hernandez, Mike Mertens, and Dr. Christine Holt.

The meeting was called to order by President Stephanie Dixon.

Dr. Buie made a motion to approve the minutes from September, seconded by Becky Kessler. The minutes were approved.

Dr. Buie made a motion to approve the financial and expenditure reports for September. The motion was seconded by Gary Jameson. Motion passed.

**RECRUITMENT & RETENTION:** Vicki Jewell

Ms. Jewell shared data from the First Quarter Recruitment & Retention Report. She highlighted topics in the report for the superintendents such as the novice teacher registry. Ms. Jewell also informed the board about professional development opportunities offered here at the co-op for their novices as well as any other of their teachers that may be interested.

**UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS HOPE TEXARKANA:** Dr. Christine Holt

Dr. Holt, the new chancellor of UAHT, addressed the superintendents and guests by first saying she “is here to build a relationship with the superintendents that will benefit all students in Southwest Arkansas.” Dr. Holt told the board a little of her background as well as her vision for UAHT to become a national model in academic excellence. She expressed a desire to work with each superintendent and their district to partner in planning for college readiness. Dr. Holt encouraged the superintendents to reach out to her with any areas of concerns or needs they may have and let them know she is eager to collaborate with them.

**ARP TECHNOLOGY GRANT PROPOSAL:**  Ms. Bailey presented to the board the proposal for the rollout of funds from the ARP Technology Grant. Included in the handout are specific projects, timelines and estimated costs. Dr. Buie asked if some of the grant could possibly be used to help the districts to cover certain software site license fees. Ms. Bailey will be checking into that being a possibility. After some discussion Robert Edwards made a motion to approve the proposal seconded by Roy McCoy, the motion passed.

**AAEA UPDATES:**  Mike Hernandez and Mike Mertens

Dr. Hernandez and Mr. Mertens updated the board on legislative session topics including COVID-19 mandates and restructuring of zoning lines in school districts.

**DIRECTOR’S UPDATE:**  Phoebe Bailey

Ms. Bailey gave the board updates from the AESA Legislative session on Supreme Court rulings as well as upcoming cases. Ms. Bailey also made the board aware of the rollout of ARP Homeless I and Homeless II grant funding. DESE is currently updating the Homeless numbers. Districts that do not meet the $5,000 threshold will have to pool their money into a consortium, similar to the way we handle Perkins’s funding.

Bus Driver Certification: Ms. Bailey asked the superintendents if they wanted her to continue looking for training courses for the new bus driver requirements or would they rather develop something on their own like Southeast Co-op is doing. After some discussion Robert Edwards said he would be willing to help develop some training with input from the Hope school districts director of transportation and Southeast Co-op.

Air Purification Proposal: Ms. Bailey requested from the board to purchase 13 Delos Ultrafine air purification systems for the ECH sites and training rooms using ECH Cares funds from DHS. Mr. McCoy made a motion to approve the purchase and Dr. Buie seconded the motion. Motion passed.

November Meeting: The November board meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 9th at 10:00. Assistant Commissioner Karli Saracini will be presenting on the new AR Teacher Residency Model. Superintendents are encouraged to invite building principals and any HR staff to hear the presentation.

**TEACHER CENTER UPDATE:**  Monica Morris

Standards & Assessment: DESE has partnered with Schoolhouse.world to offer free tutoring to students. R.I.S.E. resource site has added many resources for teachers and their students. Ms. Morris reminded the board that a certified computer science educator must be employed in every high school in Arkansas beginning with the 2023-24 school year. In 2025-26 all Arkansas Computer Science teachers will be required to hold the #528 Computer Science Endorsement.

TESS/LEADS: There will be a TESS overview for administrators on October 19th from 9:00-12:00 and a LEADS virtual seminar on October 20th and 27th from 8:30-11:30. The Minority Teacher and Administrator Recruitment Plans are for districts with more than 5% minority students and must be complete and submitted no later than October 15th. The 21st CCLC grant application process will close on December 3rd.

With no other business, Robert Edwards made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Dr. Buie.

The meeting was adjourned.