

**Southwest Arkansas Education Cooperative Board's Minutes
March 9, 2022**

Schools Present: Fouke, Genoa, Texarkana, Lafayette, Prescott, and Hope.

Schools Not Present: Spring Hill, Blevins, and Nevada.

Co-op Staff Present: Phoebe Bailey, Monica Morris, Eva Wood, Lynn Foster, Gina Perkins, Tanya Collins, Vicki Jewell, Vanessa Shelburne, and Lori Arnette.

The meeting was called to order by Becky Kessler.

Johnathan Crossley made a motion to approve the minutes from February, seconded by Robert Poole. The minutes were approved.

Robert Edwards made a motion to approve the financial and expenditure reports for February. The motion was seconded by Gary Jameson. Motion passed.

Director Updates: Phoebe Bailey

CHNS: Lori Arnette was introduced by Ms. Bailey as our new CHNS. Ms. Arnette let the superintendents know that she has been making her rounds in each of their districts introducing herself to their nursing staff and offering support.

PAPER BID: Ms. Bailey gave the superintendents a form to fill out for the upcoming paper bid, as well as information about their previous years ordering, and asked for the order form for 22-23 school year to be returned by April 6th.

PERSONNEL POLICY: New mid- year policy updates were released by the Arkansas School Board Association. After being reviewed and accepted by the SWAEC personnel policy committee, Ms. Bailey recommended they be added to our policy manual. Ms. Bailey also recommended approval to change some language pertaining to the mileage reimbursement policy. Robert Edwards made a motion to approve these changes and it was seconded by Robert Poole. The motion was approved.

SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR: Ms. Bailey asked the board for recommendations on nominations for AR Rural Education Association superintendent of the year. Robert Poole nominated Stephanie Dixon from Blevins. Robert Edwards seconded the nomination. It was approved to submit Ms. Dixon as the nominee from SWAEC

PROGRAM MOU'S: The area program MOUs were given to each superintendent for their review and signatures.

CULTURE SURVEY: Ms. Bailey spoke about the results of the most recent Culture Survey at SWAEC. Ms. Bailey reported 71% of staff responded. She gave them the high points as well as things she feels are areas for improvement. Ms. Bailey noted she is pleased with the improvements since the last survey, but recognizes areas for growth.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES: Ms. Bailey went over the legislative updates that are all on the Governor's desk awaiting his signature. The superintendents were given a handout with bill summaries.

The language that had been in effect setting the start date has been struck and now districts can choose their start date beginning as early as July 1.

Due to increased risk for cyber- attacks, Ms. Bailey gave the link to the School Safety Task Force released the K-12 School Security Guide, a set of products designed to inform safety and physical security planning for the range of kindergarten through grade 12.

TEACHER CENTER UPDATES: Monica Morris

STANDARDS & ASSESSMENT: Ms. Morris let the superintendents know that optional assessment tools for grades 3-8 will be extended one more year for the 2022-23 school year. Districts should continue using the same 3-8 assessment selection they've used the last two years. Cambium Assessment Inc., (CAI) has been identified as the preferred vendor for our new assessment, beginning 2023-24 school year.

The new school Value-Added Growth Model is now available. OIE and OIT built a new module in LEA Insights that allows you to dig into your school's value-added growth score from your ESSA School Index. .

DESE is inviting schools that provide Pre-K services to children the year before kindergarten the opportunity to register to receive the Launchpad Foundational Literacy Curriculum. School leaders will need to complete and submit this form by May 31st.

DESE is requesting applications for SOAR grants for K-12 schools and/or districts. The deadline to apply is April 1st.

The Special Education Resource Teacher Academy is a professional development program for currently standard licensed Arkansas teachers who are seeking a Special Ed. Resource endorsement. The Academy is conducted in the summer and all participants should complete the entire program within one year.

Ms. Morris advised the superintendents that Praxis support and free tutoring for any of their novice teachers is available and gave them Ms. Jewell's contact information.

Ms. Morris let the superintendents know that DESE has provided a grant to pay for background checks for potential substitutes and they could send them here to the co-op to have those done.

A new alternative preparation route to help non-licensed teachers become licensed in Early Childhood Pre-K will be available summer 2022. The Academy will be at no cost to the participant. Applicants must have been employed in the 2021-22 school year and be employed in 2022-23 in a setting serving three, four, or five year old students in AR.

STEM MODEL PROGRAM: Vanessa Shelburne

Ms. Shelburne gave a brief presentation about the STEM Model Program that is available to all school districts in Arkansas and how beneficial it would be to their students. She explained the steps in order for them to become a part of this program as well as the timeline the program will take to complete. Ms. Shelburne will email the superintendents a link to the DESE website which has more details about the STEM Program.

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION: Vicki Jewell

Ms. Jewell addressed the superintendents about discrepancies in the novice teacher registry and the Cycle 2 Cognos report that lists the novice teachers in our districts. Ms. Jewell passed out the reports to the

superintendents and asked them to compare them and to let her know of any corrections or additions she needs to make regarding her novice teacher list.

With no other business Robert Edwards made a motion to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Robert Poole. The meeting was adjourned.