

Southwest Arkansas Education Cooperative Board's Minutes April 16, 2026

Schools Present: Spring Hill, Prescott, Genoa, Hope Proxy - Jocelyn Wiley, Nevada, Texarkana Proxy - Leah Metcalf, Lafayette

Schools Not Present: Fouke, Blevins

Co-op Staff Present: Monica Morris, Gina Perkins, Katlin Niemeyer

Guests Present: Mikki Curtis, Dr. Kim Level, and Kristie Fowler (via zoom)
Baldwin & Shell Construction Services

The meeting was called to order by Monica Morris.

Larry Smith made a motion to approve the minutes from March. Bradley Wright seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Jon Estes made a motion to approve the financial and expenditure reports from March. The motion was seconded by Jeffrey Steed. The motion was approved.

UAHT/UAM - Mikki Curtis introduced a partnership that would enable students to receive their AA and BA in education through the UAHT campus. Dr. Kim Level spoke about the details of the program and how districts can hire these students before they fully complete the program. Kristie Fowler added that the program provides each student with a university supervisor to help mentor them through the entire program.

Data Report - Katlin Niemeyer

Katlin shared information regarding the Local LEADS program that focuses on Early Childhood Education. Slot availability in our area has become a big issue. She shared the other barriers that parents and students face when looking for childcare and preschool options. Katlin also spoke about the trainings held at SWAEC for local Early Childhood staff. The state has created a new quality rating system and Katlin shared where we are in that process.

Teacher Center Updates - Monica Morris

K-3 End-of-Year Literacy webinar materials have been shared. Most K-2 scores are immediate, with some taking 5-7 days due to hand scoring. Grades 3-10 scores are mostly immediate, except for writing, and results will be posted gradually; reading and writing are combined for the overall ELA score.

By the 2027-28 school year, all administrators must be credentialed annually in TESS. The SWAEC will host a three-day training June 23-25 (date updated), with registration through NIET. Superintendents will also be required to complete LEADS credentialing.

The Merit Incentive Fund webpage has been updated with new resources for teachers and administrators, including checklists, key information, videos, and an FAQ.

Roster Verification runs April 12-26 for teachers, April 29-May 3 for principals, and May 6-17 for superintendents, with videos and slide decks available.

The next ARAPP Work session is April 22nd.

Nimble is a teacher job board that is free to districts in 2026, and principals can sign up now to start matching with potential candidates.

The Summer Professional Learning update includes Teen Suicide Awareness and Prevention through Speak Up, Speak Out (ARIDEAS) on July 21 at SWAEC, along with sessions on Tier 1 (June 10 AM), absenteeism (June 10 PM), HQIM Coaching (June 16), SIOP (June 16–18), and TESS Credentialing (June 23–25).

ArPEP applications and licensure will now be handled through DESE. Teacher Residency candidates in Year 2 will participate in fall and spring, while Year 1 candidates begin in spring or fall 2027; all will have four observations each semester. K–6 licensed candidates must complete AIM for SOR support, and tuition has increased to \$2,250 from \$1,500.

Director Updates

In Ms. Bailey's absence, Mrs. Morris handed out updates on the President's proposed budget and information on how the budget will impact early childhood programs in the state.

Baldwin & Shell Update - explained what their business does to help school districts.
Construction management

Salary Schedule for 26/27 - Mrs. Morris shared the proposed salary schedule for 2026/2027. After a brief discussion, Jon Estes made a motion to approve the salary schedule as presented, seconded by Bradley Wright. The salary schedule was approved.

Jon Estes made a motion to start looking for a new co-op vehicle. He asked that Ms. Bailey start the procurement process and bring those findings to the next May meeting. Larry Smith seconded the motion.

With no further business, a motion was made by Jon Estes to adjourn. Larry Smith seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.