

**Minutes
State Board Meeting
July 10, 2025**

Present: Adrienne Woods, Chair; Lisa Hunter, Vice Chair; Gary Arnold; Ken Bragg; Randy Henderson; Leigh Keener; Jeff Wood; Jeanie Wilcoxon, 2025 Arkansas Teacher of the Year; Jacob Oliva, ADE Secretary.

The Arkansas State Board of Education (State Board) met Thursday, July 10, 2025. Adrienne Woods called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM, followed by a moment of silence.

Recognition

III.1. Dallas Cathey, Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind

Item III.1. was presented by Adrienne Woods.

On May 9, 2025, Dallas Cathey, a student at the Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind, served as a guest broadcaster for the Little Rock Trojans baseball team, taking a step toward his dream of a career in sports broadcasting. Blind since birth, Cathey experiences baseball through sound, and on May 9, he introduced Trojan batters, sharing their statistics and hometowns. UALR baseball coach Chris Curry and play-by-play announcer Max Coltrane praised Cathey's baseball knowledge and work in the broadcast booth.

Mr. Cathey, a lifelong baseball enthusiast from Warren, introduced board members and the 2025-2026 State Board of Education officers.

III.2. Director Rachel Parker, Ferncliff Nature Preschool

Item III.2. was presented by Leigh Keener.

Rachel Parker is the director of the Ferncliff Nature Preschool, the first preschool of its kind in Arkansas. Preschoolers spend approximately 80% of their time outside at school, learning through activities that include taking nature walks, interacting with farm animals, creating natural structures, and using natural materials to create works of art.

Director Parker was named 2024 Arkansas Environmental Education Association (AEEA) Outstanding Formal Environmental Educator and was featured in AEEA news article dated December 17, 2024.

Changes to Agenda

Added

Action Item V.4. Reschedule the August State Board meeting

A motion was made to add Item V.4 to the Action Agenda in regard to moving the date of the August State Board Meeting. The motion was made by Dr. Gary Arnold, seconded by Leigh Keener. The motion unanimously passed.

Action Agenda

V.1. Consideration of Rules Governing Student Discipline to be Released for Public Comment

Item V.1. was presented by Courteny Salas-Ford, Chief of Staff.

The DESE Rule Governing Student Discipline was presented to the State Board for approval to be released for public comment.

A motion to release for public comment DESE Rules Governing Student Discipline was made by Ken Brag, seconded by Randy Henderson. The motion unanimously passed.

V.2. Consideration of Rules Governing the Public School Rating System on Annual School Performance Reports and the School Recognition Program for Final Approval

Item V.2. was presented by Courteny Salas-Ford, Chief of Staff.

The Rules Governing the Public School Rating System on Annual School Performance Reports and the School Recognition Program were approved to be released for public comment by the State Board of Education on May 22, 2025. The public comment period began on May 11, 2024, and ended on June 10, 2025. The Division requests the State Board of Education's final approval of the rule.

A motion of final approval of DESE Rules Governing the Public School Rating System on Annual School Performance Reports and the School Recognition Program was made by Ken Bragg, seconded by Lisa Hunter. The motion unanimously passed.

V.3. Date Change for August State Board Meeting

A motion to move the regular August State Board meeting from August 14, 2025, to August 1, 2025, was made by Jeff Wood, seconded by Dr. Gary Arnold. The motion unanimously passed.

V.4. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-098 - Diamani Davis

Item V.4. was presented by Whitney James, Managing Attorney. The educator, Diamani Davis, was absent and was not represented by counsel.

The educator objected to the Ethics Hearing Subcommittee's evidentiary hearing findings and recommendation of April 23, 2025, and requested a review by the State Board.

A motion to find Diamani Davis, educator, violated Standard 1 and Standard 2 of the Code of Ethics was made by Adrienne Woods, seconded by Lisa Hunter. The motion unanimously passed.

A motion to accept the sanctions of the Professional Licensure Standards Board was made by Lisa Hunter, seconded by Randy Henderson. The motion unanimously passed.

A motion to accept the rationale of the Ethics Hearing Subcommittee was made by Adrienne Woods, seconded by Lisa Hunter. The motion unanimously passed.

New Business

None

Consent Agenda

1. Minutes
2. Review of Loan and Bond Applications
3. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-114 Robin Harris
4. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-180 Lauren Telford
5. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-179 Angela Dunkum
6. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-173 Robin Campbell
7. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-184 Bobby Applegate
8. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-183 Amanda Holiman
9. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-185 Sheryl Alexander
10. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-172 Sarah Faldon
11. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-175 Nicholas Garrett
12. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-191 Donnie Willis

13. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-187 Dr. Tiffany Hardrick
14. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-129 Melissa Zoll
15. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-094 Thomas Michael Stacks
16. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 24-104 Madison Harned
17. Charter Amendment Request by the Academies of Math and Sciences (AMS)

Present was Whitney James, Managing Attorney.

Pulled

VII.15. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-094 Thomas Michael Stacks

Rationale

To review the facts of the case and the Professional Licensure Standards Board decision for a three-month probation

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda, except Item VII.15. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-094 Thomas Michael Stacks was made by Lisa Hunter, seconded by Leigh Keener. The motion unanimously passed.

Lisa Hunter left the meeting.

Public Comments

- Dr. Antoinette Anderson-Gragg
- Julius Wright
- Charline Wright
- Dr. Sedrick Rice

Jeff Wood requested presentation/updates regarding:

- moving the assessment window from April to May, beginning in the 2025-2026 school year;
- a report on the Education Freedom Accounts; and
- a presentation of End-of-Year assessment scores.

Leigh Keener requested an update on Blytheville School District; Secretary Oliva said updates would be provided in August.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the State Board meeting was made by Jeff Wood, seconded by Ken Bragg. Adrienne Woods, Chair, adjourned the State Board meeting at 11:02 AM.

Minutes recorded by Angela Scaife.

Jacob Oliva, Secretary
Arkansas Department of Education

Adrienne Woods, Chair
State Board of Education