

**Minutes
State Board Meeting
September 11, 2025**

Present: Adrienne Woods, Chair; Lisa Hunter, Vice-Chair; Dr. Aaron Abbott; Dr. Gary Arnold; Randy Henderson; Jeanie Wilcoxon, 2025 Arkansas Teacher of the Year; Jacob Oliva, ADE Secretary.

Absent: Ken Bragg; Leigh Keener; Jeff Wood

Call to Order

The Arkansas State Board of Education (State Board) met Thursday, September 11, 2025. Adrienne Woods, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM, followed by a moment of silence.

9/11 Remembrance

Major Sean Gipson introduced the Cabot High School JROTC team who performed the presentation of colors, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Next, Cheyenne Caldwell sang the national anthem as Jonas Comer, signed. Both Ms. Caldwell and Mr. Comer attend the Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind.

Lastly, Brigadier General Chad Bridges, Arkansas National Guard, spoke on the 24th anniversary of September 11, 2001.

IV. Spotlight AR250

Item IV. was presented by Stacy Smith, Chief Programs Director. Also present from the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) were Dr. Brandie Benton, Education Division Administrator – Office of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure; and, Amber Pirnique, Education Professional II - Office of Learning Services – Disciplinary Literacy.

Dr. Brandie Benton and Amber Pirnique shared information regarding the Arkansas America250 (AR250) Initiative. AR250 commemorates the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and celebrates Arkansas's history through interactive state-aligned curriculum and activities developed by the Office of Learning Services - Disciplinary Literacy and Arkansas Virtual Academy. The curriculum and activities are designed for Arkansas students, parents, and communities to explore.

Changes to Agenda

None

Action Agenda

VI.1. Education Service Cooperative Annual Reports

Item VI.1. was presented by Stacy Smith, Chief Programs Director. Also present was Karen Kay McMahan, Director, South Central Service Cooperative.

Ark. Code Ann. § 6-13-1020(a) requires Education Service Cooperatives to submit an annual report to the State Board and outlines the content that must be included in each report. Fifteen (15) annual reports, one from each cooperative, were attached to the agenda.

A motion to accept the education service cooperative annual reports was made by Lisa Hunter, seconded by Dr. Gary Arnold. The motion unanimously passed.

VI.2. Update to Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Program Renewal Grants 2025-2026 Program Year

Item VI.2. was presented by Stacy Smith, Chief Programs Director.

The Office of Early Childhood requested permission to make the following changes to the Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Program Renewal Grants 2025-2026 Program:

- Trumann School District to receive 10 additional slots (4 returned from another program) for a new total of 100 ABC slots,
- Viola Little Longhorns Preschool to be added as a new agency and receive 20 new ABC slots, and a
- New budget for the 2025-2026 ABC year of \$105,687,636.00.

A motion to approve the changes to the ABC renewal grants for the 2025-2026 program year was made by Dr. Gary Arnold, seconded by Lisa Hunter. The motion unanimously passed.

Consent Agenda

1. Minutes
2. Review of Loan and Bond Applications
3. Request for the State Board to Approve ISEI Education Administration as an Accrediting Agency for Participation in the Arkansas Education Freedom Account Program
4. Charter Amendment Requests
 - a. The Academies of Math and Science appeared before the Charter Authorizing Panel on August 7, 2025, and requested to do the following:
 - add a K-8 campus in Fort Smith, Arkansas to open in Fall 2026 or Fall 2027, depending on which of two locations is selected;
 - increase the enrollment cap to 1,560, accounting for 810 students in the new school; and
 - maintain all current waivers held by AMS Little Rock for AMS Fort Smith.
 - b. Garfield Scholars' Academy appeared before the Charter Authorizing Panel on August 7, 2025, and requested to relocate from 17784 Marshall Street, Garfield, AR 72732, to 18432 Marshall Street, Garfield, AR 72732. The address at 18432 Marshall Street, Garfield, AR 72432, is the address that was submitted on page 8 of the original charter application.

A motion to approve the Consent agenda was made by Randy Henderson, seconded by Dr. Aaron Abbott. The motion unanimously passed.

New Business

None

Public Comments

The State Board heard public comments from:

- Julius Wright
- Charline Wright

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the State Board meeting was made by Dr. Aaron Abbott, seconded by Randy Henderson. Adrienne Wood, Chair, adjourned the State Board meeting at 11:20 AM.

Minutes recorded by Angela Scaife.

Jacob Oliva, Secretary
Arkansas Department of Education

Adrienne Woods, Chair
State Board of Education