

**Minutes  
State Board Meeting  
May 8, 2025**

Present: Dr. Sarah Moore, Chair; Kathy Rollins, Vice-Chair; Gary Arnold; Ken Bragg; Randy Henderson; Lisa Hunter; Leigh Keener; Jeff Wood; Adrienne Woods; Beau McCastlain, 2024 Arkansas Teacher of the Year; Jacob Oliva, ADE Secretary

**Call to Order**

The Arkansas State Board of Education (State Board) met Thursday, May 8, 2025. Dr. Sarah Moore called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM followed by a moment of silence.

**Recognition**

**111.1. President Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) Awardees for 2021, 2022, and 2023**

Item 111.1. was presented by Dr. Kiffany Pride, Assistant Commissioner- Office of Learning Services.

The PAEMST are the top honors bestowed by the U.S. Government to K-12 STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) teachers. Each year, up to 110 outstanding educators from across the country may be recognized by the White House for their passion, dedication, and impact in the classroom.

Each Presidential Awardee receives a certificate signed by the President of the United States, a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation (NSF), and an all-expenses-paid trip for an award ceremony. In addition, awardees join a national cohort of award-winning teachers, providing opportunities to impact teaching on state and national scales. The recognition events may include professional development and discussions with policymakers on how to improve science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education. The national awardees for Arkansas are:

**2021 PAEMST Mathematics and Science Awardees, Grades 7-12**

Math Category: Wesley Davis, Cabot High School

Science Category: Patrycja Krakowiak-Valdivia, Arkansas School for Mathematics, Science, and the Arts

**2022 PAEMST Mathematics and Science Awardees, Grades K-6**

Math Category: Jamie Ramsey, Jim D. Rollins School of Innovation

Science Category: Courtney Selph, Izard County Elementary School

**2023 PAEMST Mathematics and Science Awardees, Grades 7-12**

Math Category: Blake Tinsley, Conway High School

Science Category: Mary Maris, Little Rock Central High School

### **111.2. 2025 National Youth Science Camp (NYSCamp) Delegates**

Item 111.2. was presented by Dr. Kiffany Pride, Assistant Commissioner- Office of Learning Services.

The NYSCamp is a residential science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) program designed to honor and challenge some of the nation's rising STEM leaders. Hosted in Monogahela National Forest in West Virginia since 1963, the NYSCamp provides rising STEM leaders opportunities to engage with STEM professionals and participate in exciting outdoor activities.

The NYSCamp is offered to each selected participant at no cost so talented students may attend regardless of their financial ability. The camp will also provide significant opportunities for delegates to interact and engage with STEM professionals, camp staff, and other delegates in exciting, fun, and meaningful ways.

Two graduating seniors from Arkansas high schools have been selected as the State delegates for the 2025 NYSCamp:

Joseph Chen, Bentonville High School  
Sindia Michael, Arkansas School for Math, Science, and Arts.

### **111.3. 2024 Arkansas Milken Award Winners**

Item 111.3. was presented by Ms. Karli Saracini, Assistant Commissioner- Office of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure.

Ms. Bonnie Pollock, Old High Middle School, Bentonville School District and Mr. Derek Tharp, Southside Middle School, Southside School District (Batesville) were recognized for being awarded a Milken Educator Award by the Milken Family Foundation.

## **Changes to Agenda**

None

## **Action Agenda**

### **V.1. Consideration for Release for Public Comment**

Item V.1. was presented by Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner.

V.1.a. A motion to approve the release of the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Rule Governing the Public School Rating System on Annual School Performance Reports and the School Recognition Program for public comment was made by Dr. Arnold, seconded by Ms. Hunter. The motion unanimously passed.

V.1.b. A motion to approve the release of the DESE Rule Governing the Child Sexual Abuse and Human Trafficking Prevention for public comment was made by Ms. Rollins, seconded by Ms. Woods. The motion unanimously passed.

## **V.2. Rule Considered for Final Approval Rule**

Item V.2. was presented by Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner.

A motion for final approval of the DESE Rule Governing the Special Education and Related Services Sec. 18.00 - Residential Placement for public comment was made by Mr. Bragg, seconded by Mr. Henderson. The motion unanimously passed.

## **V.3. Highland School District Standard 1-A.4.1 Waiver Request**

Item V.3. was presented by Ms. Hope Worsham, Assistant Commissioner- Office of Public School Accountability.

A motion to deny the Highland School District waiver request of standard *1-A.4.1 Each public school shall provide a minimum of 178 days of student teacher interaction time* was made by Ms. Rollins, seconded by Mr. Bragg. The motion unanimously passed.

## **V.4. 2024-2025 Cited Recommendation for Maynard School District**

Item V.4. was presented by Ms. Hope Worsham, Assistant Commissioner - Office of Public School Accountability.

The Maynard School District was recommended for Cited status due to employing a district level curriculum supervisor that is unlicensed to serve in the role.

A motion to approve Cited status for the Maynard School District was made by Mr. Bragg, seconded by Dr. Arnold. The motion unanimously passed.

## **V.5. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-050 - Joanna Blocker**

Item V.3. was presented by Ms. Whitney James, Managing Attorney. Also present, representing Ms. Bocker, was attorney Katelynn Caple.

The educator objected to the Ethics Hearing Subcommittee's evidentiary hearing findings and recommendation of March 19, 2025, and requested a review by the State Board.

A motion to find that Ms. Joanna Blocker, educator, violated standards 2, 3, and 4 of the Code of Ethics was made by Ms. Keener, seconded by Dr. Arnold. The motion unanimously passed.

A motion to uphold the sanctions of the Ethics Hearing Subcommittee to permanently revoke Ms. Blocker's license and assess a \$500.00 fine was made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Ms. Keener. The motion unanimously passed.

A motion to uphold the rationale of the Ethics Hearing Subcommittee that the educator falsely reported in writing to her administration that she had a doctorate degree, leading to more than \$60,000 in overpayment and resulting in another employee being fired due to a reduction in force, and falsifying psychological specialized reports was made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Henderson. The motion unanimously passed.

### **New Business**

None

### **Consent Agenda**

1. Minutes from meetings held on April 10, 2025, and April 14, 2025
2. Review of Loan and Bond Applications
3. Report on Waivers to School Districts for Teachers Teaching Out of Area for Longer than sixty (60) Days, Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-309
4. 2024-2025 Recommendations for District Accreditation Status
5. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-101 Lafealle Long
6. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-141 Brandy Hughes
7. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-123 Jason Long
8. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-131 Meredith Blue
9. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-126 David Hall
10. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-105 Jason Almond
11. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-168 Kimberly Reiss
12. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-138 Sydney Martin
13. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 24-306 Curtis Shannon
14. PLSB Case 24-135 Candace Roberson - Written Reflections
15. Voluntary Recission of Open Enrollment Charter Extension for Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas at the End of the 2024-2025 School Year
16. Voluntary Recission of District Conversion Charter Extension for River Valley Academy at the End of the 2024-2025 School Year
17. Charter Amendment Request by Premier High Schools of Arkansas
18. Founders Classical Academies of Arkansas Charter Amendment Request for a Name Change
19. Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock Amendment Requests
  - a. Charter Amendment Request for Location Change and New Campus
  - b. Charter Amendment Request for an Enrollment Increase from 1,080 to 1,880
  - c. Charter Amendment Request for a Change in Grade Levels from K-8 to K-12

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Mr. Bragg, seconded by Ms. Rollins. The motion unanimously passed.

### **Public Comments**

Jesse Castleberry

### **Adjournment**

Dr. Sarah Moore, Chair, adjourned the State Board meeting at 12:20 p.m.

*Minutes recorded by Mary Perry.*

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**Jacob Oliva, Secretary**  
**Arkansas Department of Education**

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**Dr. Sarah Moore, Chair**  
**State Board of Education**