

**Minutes  
State Board Meeting  
June 12, 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, June 12, 2025. Dr. Sarah Moore called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM, followed by a moment of silence.

**Recognition**

**III.1. The Department of International and Cross-strait Education, Ministry of Education, Taiwan**

Item III.1. was presented by Ms. Capri Salaam, ADE Assistant to the Director, Office of Educator Effectiveness & Licensure. Present from the Education Division of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, Houston, TX were Ms. Yvonne Hsiao, Director General and Ms. Andrea Shuyang Yang, Director of Education Division. Also present were Mr. Shane Broadway, Vice-President for University Relations Arkansas State University System; and Dr. Harold Jeffcoat, Superintendent, Van Buren School District.

Ms. Andrea S.Y. Yang presented the memorandum of understanding on education between the Arkansas Department of Education, United States of America and the Department of International and Cross-strait Education, Ministry of Education, Taiwan. Secretary of Education Jacob Oliva signed the memorandum.

**Changes to Agenda**

None

**Action Agenda**

**V.1. Update to Arkansas Better Chance Program Renewal Grants 2025-2026 Program Year**

Item V.1. was presented by Ms. Tonya Williams, Director, Office of Early Childhood.

The Office of Early Childhood Education (OEC) requested approval for updates to the previously approved Arkansas Better Chance Program (ABC) Renewal Grants for the 2025-2026 program year.

ABC requested to support foster children, as well as homeless/displaced children, as the need arises. ABC provides waivers for identified children to receive immediate services. The

placement of a foster care and/or displaced child in an ABC program will add a per child award above the amount awarded for that program's slots during the 2025-2026 year.

OEC requested State Board approval for 2025-2026 Arkansas Better Chance Program Renewal Grants in the total amount of \$105,554,906.00.

OEC is also requested to use \$500,000 of the 2025-2026 budget to provide summer services.

A motion to approve the Arkansas Better Chance Renewal Grants 2025-2026 Program Year was made by Ms. Leigh Keener, seconded by Ms. Lisa Hunter. The motion unanimously passed.

## **V.2. Reallocation of Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Remaining Funds for 2024-2025**

Item V.2. was presented by Ms. Tonya Williams, Director, Office of Early Childhood.

The Office of Early Childhood Education requested approval to use the remaining \$852,411.90 to fund Summer Services for ABC programs.

A motion to approve the reallocation of Arkansas Better Chance Remaining Funds for 2024-2025 was made by Ms. Leigh Keener, seconded by Ms. Kathy Rollins. The motion unanimously passed.

## **V.3. Consideration of Rules to be Released for Public Comment**

### **V.3.a. Rules Governing Maternity Leave Cost Sharing**

Item V.3.a. was presented by Ms. Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner.

A motion to release for public comment Item V.3.a. was made by Ms. Kathy Rollins, seconded by Mr. Ken Bragg. The motion unanimously passed.

### **V.3.b. Rules Governing Public School Choice**

Item V.3.b. was presented by Ms. Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner. Also present was Ms. Courtney Salas-Ford, ADE Chief of Staff.

A motion to release for public comment Item V.3.b. was made by Dr. Gary Arnold, seconded by Mr. Jeff Wood. The motion unanimously passed.

#### **V.4. Consideration of Rules for Final Approval**

Items V.4.a. – V.4.c. were presented by Ms. Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner.

##### **V.4.a. Rules Governing Child Sexual Abuse and Human Trafficking Prevention**

The Division of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) Rules Governing Child Sexual Abuse and Human Trafficking Prevention 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 requested the State Board of Education's final approval of the rule to go to the Arkansas Legislative Council.

A motion for final approval of the DESE Rules Governing Child Sexual Abuse and Human Trafficking Prevention was made by Ms. Adrienne Woods, seconded by Mr. Ken Bragg. The motion unanimously passed.

##### **V.4.b. Rules Governing the First Connections Program Under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**

The DESE Rules Governing the First Connections Program Under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act were approved to be released for public comment by the State Board of Education on November 7, 2024. The public comment period began on May 4, 2025, and ended on June 5, 2025. The Division requested the State Board of Education's final approval of the rule.

A motion for final approval of the DESE Rules Governing the First Connections Program Under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was made by Mr. Randy Henderson, seconded by Ms. Leigh Keener. The motion unanimously passed.

##### **V.4.c. Rules Governing Dyslexia Screenings and Interventions**

The DESE Rules Governing Dyslexia Screenings and Interventions were approved to be released for public comment by the State Board of Education on May 9, 2024. The public comment period began on May 10, 2024, and ended on June 10, 2024. A second round of public comment began on April 20, 2025, and ended on May 20, 2025. The Division requested the State Board of Education's final approval of the rule.

A motion for final approval of the DESE Rules Governing Dyslexia Screenings and Interventions was made by Ms. Adrienne Woods, seconded by Ms. Lisa Hunter. The motion unanimously passed.

## **V.5. High School Course Offerings**

Item V.5. was presented by Dr. Kiffany Pride, Assistant Commissioner – Office of Learning Services. Also present was Ms. Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner and Mr. Ross White, Director, Office of the Division of Career & Technical Education.

Arkansas public school districts and open-enrollment charter schools are required to offer a minimum number of unique courses, per the DESE Rules Governing Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts, Appendix A, Standard 1-A.1.3.

A motion to approve the high school course offerings was made by Mr. Randy Henderson, seconded by Mr. Ken Bragg. The motion unanimously passed.

## **V.6. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-121 - Danny R. Marrs, Jr.**

Item V.6. was presented by Ms. Whitney James, Managing Attorney. Also present was Mr. Daniel Shults, ADE Litigation Attorney; Mr. Khayaam Eddings, Attorney, Friday, Eldridge & Clark; and Mr. Danny Marrs, Jr., Educator.

At its regularly scheduled meeting on April 10, 2025, the State Board of Education requested the Professional Licensure Standards Board's recommendation for Case 25-121 – Danny R. Marrs, Jr. to be moved from the Consent Agenda to the next available Action Agenda. The hearing was scheduled for June 12, 2025, and Danny Marrs's attorney was notified of the hearing date.

A motion to find that Mr. Danny Marrs, Jr., educator, violated Standards 1a, 2a, 2b, and 3a of the Code of Ethics was made by Ms. Adrienne Woods, seconded by Dr. Gary Arnold. The motion unanimously passed.

A motion to modify the sanctions of the Ethics Subcommittee to a one-year suspension of educator license, followed by a two-year probation, to include recommended trainings and readings; quarterly reports and written reflections; without a fine was made by Mr. Jeff Wood, seconded by Ms. Leigh Keener. The motion passed 7 Yes, 1 No (Mr. Ken Bragg).

A motion to accept the rationale of the Ethics Subcommittee and add that the State Board finds a lack of mitigating factors and a preponderance of aggravating factors was made by Ms. Leigh Keener, seconded by Ms. Adrienne Woods. The motion unanimously passed.

## **New Business**

None

## **Consent Agenda**

1. Minutes
2. Report on Waivers to School Districts for Teachers Teaching Out of Area for Longer than sixty (60) Days, Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-309
3. Voluntary Recission of District Conversion Charter Extension for Centerpoint Academy of Agriculture & Skilled Trade
4. Voluntary Recission of District Conversion Charter Extension for Adventure Online Academy
5. Charter Amendment Request--Arkansas Virtual Academy
6. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-008 Jessica Tedder
7. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-060 Renee Young
8. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-065 Luke Brewer
9. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 23-038 Triston Clements
10. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-150 Arthur Bell Jr.
11. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-128 Michael Kneeland
12. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-178 Andrew Aycock
13. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-110 Chantal Jones
14. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-149 Monica Cole
15. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-132 Christopher Paslay

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

## **Public Comments**

- Julius Wright
- Charline Wright

## **Adjournment**

Dr. Sarah Moore, Chair, adjourned the State Board meeting at 2:00 PM.

*Minutes recorded by Angela Scaife.*

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

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**Adrienne Woods, Chair**  
**State Board of Education**