

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

Present: Adrienne Woods, Chair; Lisa Hunter, Vice-Chair; Dr. Aaron Abbott; Dr. Gary Arnold; Ken Bragg; Leigh Keener; David Peacock; Jeff Wood; Jeanie Wilcoxon, 2025 Arkansas Teacher of the Year; Jacob Oliva, ADE Secretary.

Absent: Randy Henderson

The Arkansas State Board of Education (State Board) met Thursday, December 11, 2025. Adrienne Woods, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM, followed by a moment of silence, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the National Anthem, which was sung by the Pea Ridge Chamber Choir, grades 10-12, led by Sara Beth Eubanks, High School Choir Director. Additionally, from Pea Ridge School District, a grade 9 student signed the National Anthem alongside the choir.

Recognition

V.1. U.S. Presidential Scholars

Item V.1. was introduced by Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner. Also present was U.S. Presidential Scholar, Nideyaya E. Fassler - Russellville High School.

In September 2025, the following five Arkansas students were named U.S. Presidential Scholars:

- Taylor Matthew Conran - Farmington High School,
- Nideyaya E. Fassler - Russellville High School,
- Xavier Christopher Herzog - Alma High School,
- Scarlet Moore Hudgins - Elkins High School, and
- Aubrey Scherer - Rogers Heritage High School.

Changes to Agenda

None

Action Agenda

VII.1. Review of District Strategic Plans for School Districts that Received a "F" Letter Grade

Item VII.1. was presented by Secretary Jacob Oliva.

Arkansas Code 6-15-2108 was amended by the AR ACCESS Act (Act 340 of 2025) to require the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop a formula to determine a letter grade for public school districts. Each of the six school districts listed below received a letter grade of "F" for the 2024-2025 school year. Arkansas Code 6-15-2919 requires each public school district to develop a district strategic plan, which shall include without limitation the support the school district will provide to public schools within the district.

VII.1.a. Watson Chapel School District

Item VII.1.a. was introduced by Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner. Present for Watson Chapel School District was Dr. Keith McGee, Superintendent; Mack Milner, School Board President; and Cathi Swan, Director, Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative.

A motion to accept the Statement of Assurances from Watson Chapel School District was made by Jeff Wood, seconded by Lisa Hunter. The motion unanimously passed.

VII.1.b. North Little Rock School District

Item VII.1.b. was introduced by Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner. Present for North Little Rock School District was Dr. Greg Pilewski, Superintendent; Dr. Rochelle Redus, School Board President; Dr. Thomas Rogers, Assistant Superintendent – School Improvement Network A; Dr. Jacob Smith, Assistant Superintendent – School Improvement Network B; Larissa Harrison, Principal, North Little Rock 6 Academy of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences; and Dr. Mark Taylor, Director, Arch Ford Education Service Cooperative.

A motion to accept the Statement of Assurances from North Little Rock School District was made by Leigh Keener, seconded by Dr. Aaron Abbott. The motion unanimously passed.

Lisa Hunter departed the meeting.

VII.1.c. Pine Bluff School District

Item VII.1.c. was introduced by Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner. Present for Pine Bluff School District was Dr. Jennifer Barbaree, Superintendent; Dr. Sederick Rice, School Board President.

A motion to accept the Statement of Assurances from Pine Bluff School District was made by Dr. David Peacock, seconded by Ken Bragg. The motion unanimously passed.

VII.1.d. Lafayette County School District

Item VII.1.d. was introduced by Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner. Present for Lafayette County School District was Jon Estes, Superintendent; Harvey Sellers, Curriculum Coordinator; Johnny Brown, School Board President; Christie Dunbar, School Board Vice President; Phoebe Bailey, Director, Southwest Education Service Cooperative.

Leigh Keener departed the meeting.

A motion to accept the Statement of Assurances from Lafayette County School District was made by Dr. Aaron Abbott, seconded by Ken Bragg. The motion passed with a vote of 3 Yes, 1 No – Jeff Wood).

Roll Call – Item VII.1.d. Layette County School District

David Peacock	Yes
Dr. Aaron Abbott	Yes
Dr. Gary Arnold	Present
Ken Bragg	Yes
Jeff Wood	No

VII.1.e. Crossett School District

Item VII.1.e. was introduced by Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner. Present for Crossett School District was Anthony Boykin, Superintendent.

A motion to accept the Statement of Assurances from Crossett School District was made by Dr. David Peacock, seconded by Dr. Gary Arnold. The motion unanimously passed.

Mr. Jeff Wood departed the meeting.

VII.1.f. Fordyce School District

Item VII.1.e. was introduced by Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner. Present for Fordyce School District was Rhonda Lawson, Superintendent; Nicholas Cranford, School Board President; and Susan Ridings, School Board Vice President.

A motion to grant the Fordyce School District waiver request was made by Dr. Gary Arnold, seconded by Ken Bragg. The motion unanimously passed.

VII.2. 2026 State Board of Education Meeting Dates

Item VII.2. was presented by Adrienne Woods, Chair.

Ark. Code Ann. § 6-11-104(b) states, "In any of its meetings before the end of the calendar year, the state board shall determine the meeting dates for the following year."

This item originally appeared on the Action Agenda for the October 9 State Board of Education

Meeting. It was returned to the November 13 Action Agenda because three of the 2026 dates on the October 9 agenda, the July, September, and December meeting dates, were not second Thursdays of the month, and the State Board has met on every second Thursday for several years.

At its meeting on November 13, the State Board of Education tabled its discussion of the meeting dates.

The following dates are second Thursdays of each month in 2026:

- January 8, 2026,
- February 12, 2026,
- March 12, 2026,
- April 9, 2026,
- May 14, 2026,
- June 11, 2026,
- July 9, 2026,
- August 13, 2026,
- September 10, 2026,
- October 8, 2026,
- November 12, 2026, and
- December 10, 2026.

A motion to approve the 2026 State Board meeting dates was made by Dr. Aaron Abbott, seconded by Ken Bragg. The motion unanimously passed.

New Business

None

Consent Agenda

1. Minutes
2. Applications for Charters
 - a. Arkansas Outdoor Academy - Open-Enrollment Charter Application
 - b. Titan Learning Academy - District Conversion Charter
3. Charter Amendment Requests
 - a. LISA Academy Amendment Requests
 - b. KIPP Amendment Requests

A motion to approve the Consent agenda was made by Dr. Gary Arnold, seconded by Ken Bragg. The motion unanimously passed.

Public Comments

The State Board heard public comments from:

- Stephanie White
- Angie Edwards – Written comments submitted to State Board members
- Audie Alumbaugh

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the State Board meeting was made by Ken Bragg. Adrienne Woods, Chair, adjourned the State Board meeting at 4:20 PM.

Minutes recorded by Angela Scaife.

Jacob Oliva, Secretary
Arkansas Department of Education

Adrienne Woods, Chair
State Board of Education