

**Minutes
State Board Meeting
November 13, 2025**

Present: Adrienne Woods, Chair; Lisa Hunter, Vice-Chair; Dr. Aaron Abbott; Dr. Gary Arnold; Ken Bragg; Randy Henderson; David Peacock; Jeff Wood; Jacob Oliva, ADE Secretary.

Absent: Leigh Keener; Jeanie Wilcoxon, 2025 Arkansas Teacher of the Year

The Arkansas State Board of Education (State Board) met Thursday, November 13, 2025. Adrienne Woods, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM, followed by a moment of silence, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the National Anthem, which was sung by a grade 7 and grade 8 quintet from the Pulaski Academy Singers Choir, led by John Willis, Director of Fine Arts. Additionally, from the Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind, Nicole Walsh, superintendent, introduced Mike, a sophomore at the school who signed the National Anthem alongside the choir and then introduced himself to the board.

Recognition

V.1. Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) Student Leaders

In Arkansas, eight Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) are recognized and comprised of approximately of more than 50,000 student members. These organizations align with students' selected career pathways and provide opportunities for work-based learning, networking with industry professionals, and leadership development. The following students were recognized at the State Board meeting:

Eva Orr, National President
Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)
Heber Springs High School

X'Zaievium Sims, National President-Elect
Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) Career Association
Pine Bluff High School

Evie Hernandez, State President
DECA (Formerly known as Distributive Education Clubs of America)
Southside High School (Fort Smith)

Wyatt Pettry, State President
Educator's Rising
Nemo Vista High School

Taylor Peters, State President
Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA)

Piggott High School

Lauren Carter, State President
Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)
Valley View High School

Julieann Stacks, State President
FFA (Formerly known as Future Farmers of America)
Taylor High School (Graduate)
Southern Arkansas University

Joann Kim, State President
HOSA (Formerly known as Health Occupations Students of America)
Valley View High School

Lauren Curtis, State President
SkillsUSA
Cabot High School

Breanna Morris, State President
Technology Student Association (TSA)
Alma High School

V.2. Resolution from the Arkansas State Board of Education Declaring January 2026 as School Board Member Recognition Month

Item V.2. was presented by Secretary Jacob Oliva. Also present was Jeff Lisenby, President, Arkansas School Boards Association.

A resolution, recognizing and saluting members of local boards of education by proclaiming the month of January 2026 as Arkansas School Board Member Recognition Month was presented for review by the State Board and read aloud by Jeff Lisenby.

Changes to Agenda

None

Action Agenda

VII.1. Cleveland County Waiver Request for Elementary Class Size

Item VII.1. was presented by Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner. Also present was David King, Superintendent, Cleveland County School District.

Cleveland County School District requested a waiver of the third-grade class size requirement at Rison Elementary. Third-grade enrollment totals fifty-one (51) students, divided between two (2) classrooms with twenty-five (25) students in one class and twenty-six (26) students in the other. This configuration exceeds the limits established by the elementary class size standards.

A motion to grant the Cleveland County School) waiver request was made by Lisa Hunter, seconded by Dr. Gary Arnold. The motion unanimously passed.

VII.2. Career and Technical Education Standards

Item VII.2. was presented by Ross White, Education Division Administrator, Career and Technical Education.

The Division of Career and Technical Education is seeking approval of revised standards for 74 courses available at the following link: <http://bit.ly/3KOOkBrc>

A motion to approve the revised standards of 74 courses was made by Dr. Aaron Abbott, seconded by Randy Henderson. The motion unanimously passed.

VII.3. Request to Release the DESE Rules Governing the Arkansas Children's Educational Freedom Account Program for Public Comment

Item VII.3. was presented by Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner. Also present was Dr. Darrell Smith, Assistant Commissioner, School Choice and Parent Empowerment.

It was stated that amendments to the DESE Rules Governing the Arkansas Children's Educational Freedom Account Program are necessary to implement changes from Act 920 of 2025. DESE requested approval to release the rules for public comment.

A motion to release for comment the DESE Rules Governing the Arkansas Children's Educational Freedom Account Program, contingent upon a State Board work session about the rules before the next State Board meeting, was made by Dr. Gary Arnold, seconded by Dr. Aaron Abbott. The motion passed with a vote of 6 to 1. Jeff Wood voted no.

VII.4. Request to Release the DCTE Rules Governing the Arkansas Adult Diploma Program for Public Comment

Item VII.4. was presented by Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner.

It was stated that amendments to the DCTE Rules Governing the Arkansas Adult Diploma Program are necessary to implement changes from Act 502 of 2025. DCTE requested approval to release the rules for public comment.

A motion to release for public comment the DCTE Rules Governing the Arkansas Adult Diploma Program was made by Lisa Hunter, seconded by Randy Henderson. The motion unanimously passed.

VII.5. 2026 State Board of Education Meeting Dates

Item VII.5. was presented by Courtney Salas-Ford, Chief of Staff.

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 is returned to the State Board for approval as three dates on the October 9 agenda, specifically the July, September, and December meeting dates, were not second Thursdays of the month.

Keeping with the tradition of meeting every second Thursday of the month, the following Thursdays are proposed for 2026 meetings:

- 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 table the 2026 State Board meeting dates was made by Jeff Wood, seconded by Dr. Aaron Abbott. The motion unanimously passed.

New Business

None

Consent Agenda

1. Minutes
2. Review of Loan and Bond Applications
3. PLSB Case 25-094 Thomas Michael Stacks — Written Reflections and Certificate

A motion to approve the Consent agenda was made by Lisa Hunter, seconded by Dr. David Peacock. The motion unanimously passed.

Public Comments

The State Board heard public comments from:

- Gary Newton
- Charline Wright
- Julius Wright

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the State Board meeting was made by Jeff Wood. Adrienne Woods, Chair, adjourned the State Board meeting at 11:08 AM.

Minutes recorded by Angela Scaife.



Jacob Oliva, Secretary
Arkansas Department of Education



Adrienne Woods, Chair
State Board of Education