

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

Present: Kathy Rollins, Vice-Chair; Dr. Gary Arnold; Ken Bragg; Lisa Hunter; Leigh Keener; Adrienne Woods; Beau McCastlain, 2024 Arkansas Teacher of the Year; Jacob Oliva, ADE Secretary; Stacy Smith, Ex-Officio.

Present via Zoom: Dr. Sarah Moore, Chair; Randy Henderson

Absent: Jeff Wood

The Arkansas State Board of Education (State Board) met Thursday, February 13, 2025. Ms. Kathy Rollins, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM, followed by a moment of silence.

Recognition

III.1. Jeanie Wilcoxon, 2025 Arkansas Teacher of the Year

Item III.1. was presented by Ms. Capri Saalam - Office of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure.

Ms. Jeanie Wilcoxon, Grade 4 teacher, Pulaski County Special School District, was recognized during a surprise announcement on October 4, 2024, by Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders and Secretary Jacob Oliva, as the 2025 Arkansas Teacher of the Year. Ms. Wilcoxon, who teaches at Chenal Elementary School, will join the State Board of Education as a non-voting member in July 2025.

III.2. Proclamation Declaring February Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month in Arkansas

Item III.2. was presented by Mr. Ross White, Director, Career and Technical Education.

To increase public awareness and appreciation for career and technical education, the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) annually recognizes February as CTE Month. Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders signed a proclamation declaring February 2025, CTE Month in Arkansas.

Secretary Oliva left the meeting.

Changes to Agenda

None

Action Agenda

V.1. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 24-135 - Candace Roberson

Item V.1. was presented by Ms. Whitney James, Managing Attorney. Also present were Mr. Chord Cantrell, Attorney, Cantrell Law Firm, Searcy and Ms. Candace Roberson, educator.

The educator objected to the Ethics Hearing Subcommittee's findings and recommendation of July 24, 2024, and requested a review by the State Board.

A motion to find Ms. Candace Roberson, educator, violated Standard 1 and Standard 2 of the Code of Ethics was made by Ms. Leigh Keener, seconded by Ms. Adrienne Woods. The motion unanimously passed.

A motion to modify the sanction to remove both license suspension and fine and instead sanction the educator with one-year probation, recommended training, and coursework with monitored progress, was made by Ms. Leigh Keener, seconded by Ms. Adrienne Woods. The motion unanimously passed.

A motion was made to modify the rationale of the Hearing Subcommittee to add that 1) it was not the responsibility of the educator to ensure the consistent application of safety protocols, as it falls on administration; and 2) the State Board believes mistakes were made and a mind shift of the educator is necessary for additional accountability. The motion was made by Ms. Leigh Keener, seconded by Ms. Adrienne Woods. The motion unanimously passed.

V.2. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 24-129 - Evelyn James

Item V.2. was presented by Ms. Whitney James, Managing Attorney. Also present was Ms. Evelyn James, educator.

The educator objected to the Ethics Hearing Subcommittee's evidentiary hearing findings and recommendation of October 30, 2024, and requested a review by the State Board.

A motion to find that Ms. Evelyn James, educator, violated Standard 1 and Standard 2 of the Code of Ethics was made by Ms. Adrienne Woods, seconded by Mr. Ken Bragg. The motion unanimously passed.

Dr. Gary Arnold made a motion to uphold the recommended sanctions of the Ethics Hearing Subcommittee but reduce the educator fine to \$250. Ms. Leigh Keener seconded. The motion unanimously passed.

A motion to uphold the rationale of the Hearing Subcommittee was made by Mr. Ken Bragg, seconded by Ms. Lisa Hunter. The motion unanimously passed.

V.3. Graduate Arkansas Charter, Cited Recommendation, Standard 1-C.1.1

Item V.3. was presented by Ms. Hope Worsham, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Public School Accountability. Also present from Graduate Arkansas were Ms. Katie Hatley, Superintendent; Ms. Katherine Guintivano, District Testing Coordinator; and Mr. Thomas Coy, Curriculum Director.

The school assessed fewer than 95% of their students on the annual statewide student assessment. Not wanting to maintain a Cited accreditation status, Graduate Arkansas appealed.

A motion for Graduate Arkansas Charter to remain on Cited status for their second year was made by Ms. Leigh Keener, seconded by Mr. Ken Bragg. The motion passed 7 Yes to 1 No (Ms. Adrienne Woods).

V.4. Premier High Schools of Arkansas, Cited Recommendation, Standard 1-C.1.1

Item V.5. was presented by Ms. Hope Worsham, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Public School Accountability. Also present from Responsive Ed Arkansas were Ms. Susan Provenza, Superintendent and Dr. Dennis Felton, Jr., Vice-President of School Operations.

The school assessed fewer than 95% of their students on the annual statewide student assessment. Not wanting to maintain a Cited accreditation status, Premier High School Online appealed.

A motion to remove Premier High School of Arkansas from Cited status was made by Dr. Gary Arnold, seconded by Ms. Leigh Keener. The motion unanimously passed.

New Business

None

Consent Agenda

1. Minutes
2. Board Member Stipend Amount for 2025
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. Review of Loan and Bond Applications
5. Arkansas Educational Television Commission (AETN) Cash Letter
6. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-034 Regan DeBlieux
7. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 24-276 Cary Cossey
8. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-049 Clifton Woodley
9. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 24-175 Beth Vaccaro
10. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 24-246 Tyler Bevill
11. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 24-275 Keith Cornett
12. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-019 Tyson Davis
13. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-045 Kody Williams
14. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-055 Bakari Norman
15. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Cases 25-018 and 25-062 John Cameron
16. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 25-041 Billy Phelan
17. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 24-293 Myka Hughes
18. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case 24-279 Cynthia Murphy
19. Consideration of Request for Approval of Nominated Member for the Professional Licensure Standards Board to Replace Member Whose Term Expires June 30, 2025 - Dr. Charlotte Wright

A motion to approve the Consent agenda was made by Mr. Randy Henderson, seconded by Ms. Lisa Hunter. The motion unanimously passed.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the State Board meeting was made by Ms. Adrienne Woods, seconded by Ms. Lisa Hunter. The motion unanimously passed. Ms. Kathy Rollins, Acting Chair, adjourned the State Board meeting at 12:10 PM.

Minutes recorded by Angela Scaife.



Stacy Smith, Ex-Officio Secretary
Arkansas Department of Education



Dr. Sarah Moore, Chair
State Board of Education