

**Minutes
State Board Meeting
July 9, 2026**

Present: Randy Henderson, Chair; Dr. Gary Arnold, Vice Chair; Ken Bragg; Lisa Hunter; David Peacock; Stephanie Williams, 2026 Arkansas Teacher of the Year; Jacob Oliva, ADE Secretary.

Absent: Dr. Aaron Abbott; Leigh Keener; Jeff Wood

Call to Order

The Arkansas State Board of Education (State Board) met Thursday, July 9, 2026. Randy Henderson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM, followed by a moment of silence, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the National Anthem sung by Grayson Gammill, North Little Rock High School.

Recognition

V.1. 2025-2026 Master Principal Program Designation Candidates

Item V.1. was presented by Secretary Jacob Oliva and Dr. Brandie Benton, Assistant Commissioner – Office of Educator Effectiveness & Licensure. Also present was Dr. Bradley Webber, Director of the Leadership Academy.

Following site visits in Spring 2026, the Arkansas Leadership Academy recognized the following principals with the designation of Master Principal:

Recognized Master Principals:

Kelly Krogman, Westside Elementary, Greenbrier School District
Ahna Davis, Cabot Freshman Academy, Cabot School District
Darah Bennett, Central Office, formerly of Pea Ridge Primary School, Pea Ridge School District
Dr. Dawn Childress, Cook Elementary School (former principal of Orr Elementary),
Fort Smith School District
Tracey Wood, Apple Glen Elementary, Bentonville School District
Christina Hamilton, Willowbrook Elementary, Bentonville School District

Absent

Jeremy Yates, Birch Kirksey Middle School, Rogers School District

Changes to Agenda

None

Action Agenda

VII.1. Consideration of Request(s) for Final Approval of Rules

VII.1.a. Request for Final Approval of the Rules Governing Public School Policies Relating to Overnight Travel and Use of Public School Lavatories

Item VII.1.a. was presented by Hope Worsham, Assistant Commissioner – Office of Public School Accountability.

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) requested final approval of the Rules Governing Public School Policies Relating to Overnight Travel and Use of Public School Lavatories be adopted and submitted to the General Assembly for review. This amendment reflects changes made by Act 119 of 2025. A public comment period ran from May 15th to June 15th, and a public hearing was held on June 8th.

A motion for final approval of the Rules Governing Public School Policies Relating to Overnight Travel and Use of Public School Lavatories and submission to the General Assembly for review was made by David Peacock, seconded by Lisa Hunter. The motion unanimously passed.

VII.1.b. Request for Final Approval of the Rules Governing the Course Choice Program

Item VII.1.b. was presented by Dr. Kiffany Pride, Assistant Commissioner – Office of Learning Services.

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) requested final approval of the Rules Governing the Course Choice Program be adopted and submitted to the General Assembly for review. This rule is being promulgated pursuant to the requirements of Act 237 of 2023, § 20 and Act 730 of 2025. A public comment period ran from May 15th to June 15th, and a public hearing was held on June 8th.

A motion for final approval of the Rules Governing the Course Choice Program and submission to the General Assembly for review was made by Ken Bragg, seconded by Dr. Gary Arnold. The motion unanimously passed.

VII.1.c. Request for Final Approval of the Rules Governing Consolidation and Annexation of School Districts

Item VII.1.c. was presented by Greg Rogers, Assistant Commissioner – Office of Fiscal & Administrative Services.

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) requested final approval of the Rules Governing Consolidation and Annexation of School Districts to be adopted and submitted to the General Assembly for review. The amendments update the provisions governing consolidation and annexation incentive funding to reflect Act 919 of 2025 and Act 159 of 2026 governing the detachment of an isolated school district. A public comment period ran from May 15th to June 15th and a public hearing was held on June 8th.

A motion for final approval of the Rules Governing Consolidation and Annexation of School Districts and submission to the General Assembly for review was made by Lisa Hunter, seconded by Ken Bragg. The motion unanimously passed.

VII.2. Appeal(s) of the Denial of a School Choice Application

VII.2.a. Consideration of School Choice Appeal 2026-005

Item VII.2.a. was presented by Daniel Shults, Chief Legal Counsel. Also present was Gary Williams, Superintendent, Whitehall School District.

This item was an appeal of a non-resident public school district's denial of a school choice petition pursuant to the Public School Choice Act of 2015.

Denied by: Whitehall School District

Residents in: Pine Bluff School District

Reason given for denial: Lack of capacity

A motion was made to grant the appeal for the student to transfer to Whitehall School District was made by Jeff Woods, seconded by Dr. Gary Arnold. The motion unanimously passed.

Roll Call – Grant Appeal for Student Transfer

Ken Bragg	Yes
Jeff Wood	Yes
Gary Arnold	Yes
<u>Lisa Hunter</u>	<u>Present</u>
David Peacock	Yes

VII.3. Request for Waiver - LA- 26-002 - Darlisa Ware

Item VII.3. was presented by Daniel Shults, Chief Legal Counsel. Present was Darlisa Ware, educator.

The Arkansas Department of Education received information that the educator was convicted of a disqualifying criminal offense. Per Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-410, the State Board shall not issue a first-time license to a person who has pled guilty or nolo contendere to or has been found guilty of an enumerated offense by a court in the State of Arkansas or of any similar offense by a court in another state or by a federal court. The educator requested a waiver under Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-410(f).

A motion to grant the waiver request of Darlisa Ware, educator, was made by Dr. Gary Arnold, seconded by Lisa Hunter. The motion unanimously passed.

VII.4. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case No. 26-092 — Barbara Tucker

Item VII.4. was presented by Whitney James, Attorney, Public Licensure Standards Board. Also present was Barbara Tucker, educator.

The educator objected to the Ethics Hearing Subcommittee's evidentiary hearing findings and recommendation of April 29, 2026, and requested a review by the State Board.

A motion to find that Barbara Tucker, educator, violated Standards 1 and 2 of the Code of Ethics was made by David Peacock, seconded by Dr. Gary Arnold. After roll call, the motion unanimously passed.

Roll Call – Code of Ethics Standards 1 and 2

Bragg	Y
Woods	Y
Arnold	Y
Hunter	Y
Peacock	Y

A motion to modify the sanction of the Ethics Subcommittee to two (2) years probation, trainings, written reflections, and no fine was made by Jeff Woods, seconded by Ken Bragg. After roll call, the motion unanimously passed.

Roll Call – Sanctions

Bragg	Y
Woods	Y
Arnold	Y
Hunter	Y
Peacock	Y

A motion to uphold the rationales of both the Ethics subcommittee and the Ethics Hearing Subcommittee, removing any duplicative language, was made by Dr. Gary Arnold, seconded by Lisa Hunter. After roll call, the motion passed 3 Yes to 2 No (Woods; Peacock).

Roll Call – Rationale

Bragg	Y
Woods	N
Arnold	Y
Hunter	Y
Peacock	N

VII.5. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case No. 25-222 — James Buie

Item VII.5. was presented by Whitney James, Attorney, Public Licensure Standards Board. Present was Jeff Rosenzweig, Attorney for educator. Also present was Dr. James Buie, Superintendent, Fouke School District.

The educator objected to the Ethics Hearing Subcommittee's evidentiary hearing findings and recommendation of April 15, 2026, and requested a review by the State Board.

A motion to find that Dr. James Buie, educator, violated Standards 1 and 2 of the Code of Ethics was made by Jeff Wood, seconded by Lisa Hunter. After roll call, the motion unanimously passed.

Roll Call – Code of Ethics Standards 1 and 2

Bragg	Y
Woods	Y
Arnold	Y
Hunter	Y
Peacock	Y

A motion to modify the sanction of the Ethics Hearing Subcommittee to revocation of teaching license was made by David Peacock but the motion failed as there was not a second.

A motion to uphold the sanction of the Ethics Hearing Subcommittee of three (3) years of suspension of license, followed by three (3) years of probation, with fine, training, and written reflections was made by Jeff Wood, seconded by Lisa Hunter. After roll call, the motion unanimously passed.

Roll Call – Sanction

Bragg	Y
Woods	Y
Arnold	Y
Hunter	Y
Peacock	Y

A motion to uphold the rationale of the Ethics Hearing Subcommittee was made by Dr. Gary Arnold, seconded by Lisa Hunter. After roll call, the motion unanimously passed.

Roll Call – Rationale

Bragg	Y
Woods	Y
Arnold	Y
Hunter	Y
Peacock	Y

New Business

None

Consent Agenda

1. Minutes
2. Review of Loan and Bond Applications
3. Recommendations from the Charter Authorizing Panel
 - a. Charter Amendment Request by the Schools for Advanced Studies—Northwest Arkansas
 - b. District Conversion Charter Application for the Sheridan Jacket Academy
4. Renewal of Existing Charters
 - a. Arkansas Virtual Academy Schools
 - b. Graduate Arkansas
 - c. Imboden Area Charter School

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

Public Comments

The State Board heard public comments from:

- Julius Wright
- Charline Wright

Adjournment

Randy Henderson, Chair, adjourned the State Board meeting at 2:02 PM.

Minutes recorded by Angela Scaife.

Jacob Oliva, Secretary
Arkansas Department of Education

Randy Henderson, Chair
State Board of Education