

**Southwest Arkansas Education Cooperative Board's Minutes
February 16, 2021**

Schools Present: ZOOM Only

Schools Present via Zoom: Fouke, Texarkana, Prescott, Hope, Genoa, and Lafayette.

Schools Not Present: Blevins, Nevada, Spring Hill

Co-op Staff Present: Phoebe Bailey, Monica Morris, Eva Wood, Gina Perkins, Tanya Collins.

The meeting was called to order by President Jim Buie.

Robert Poole made a motion to approve the minutes from January, seconded by Bobby Hart. The minutes were approved.

Bobby Hart made a motion to approve the financial and expenditure reports for January and Robert Poole seconded the motion. Motion passed.

STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATES: Phoebe Bailey

- Ms. Bailey shared information from the AESA Federal Advocacy Conference she attended. She shared federal leadership changes in the House and Senate as well as the positions still going through confirmation hearings.
- The funds from the Reconciliation Package could start flowing to the state as early as mid-April and to the schools by May or June. 20% of the funds must be used for Learning Loss (a flexible term). The average cost per student for learning loss could be as much as \$12,000. Funding for Homework Gap is included in this package.
- Ms. Bailey gave a link to the Power Point for legal issues going through the court system.
- A list of state bills that have been filed was shared. The SWAEC legislative committee also added input on these bills.

TEACHER CENTER UPDATES: Monica Morris

Standards and Assessment

- DTC Work Days are February 16-18 & February 23-25. The on-site option has been cancelled but the virtual is still going on.
- DESE has shared a District Communication Toolkit to help families understand the importance of spring summative testing.
- Blevins HS and Arkansas HS were both awarded \$5000 for their Computer Science departments.
- School report cards are available on My School Info with the final pieces being completed by April 15th.

TESS/LEADS/Licensure/Mentoring

- Reach University has a pilot grow-your-own program for paraprofessionals who are already working in schools. A large percentage of the cost is covered by federal funds and awarded by completing the FAFSA.
- Districts may provide their own "grow-their-own" teacher recruitment program by offering high school students a CTA program and can work within the districts as they complete their program of study.

Other Information

- The Region 5 Educator Rising Conference will be held virtually on April 1, 2021.
- Arkansas schools that choose to offer a remote digital program for 21-22 school year must seek State Board of Ed. approval.
- SWAEC is sponsoring a virtual Become a Teacher event on Thursday, February 25th from 8:30-2:30. The event is for anyone interested in becoming a teacher. Sessions include financial aid info and alternative pathways to earning a teaching license.
- There is a DESE zoom on February 22nd at 1:00 to discuss innovative technologies and possibilities for use of ESSER II Funds.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

AREA Superintendent and Teacher of the Year Nominations: Nominations for both must be from district that are members of AR Rural Education Association including Blevins, Genoa, Hope, Prescott, and Spring Hill districts. Bobby Hart nominated Stephanie Dixon from Blevins for Superintendent of the Year and was seconded by Robert Edwards. The deadline for districts to submit names for Teacher of the Year nominations is April 1st. Please send these nominations to SWAEC.

Digital Learning Options: Cooperatives around the state are offering digital learning options for districts for the 2021-2022 school year. Ms. Bailey provided a handout with a breakdown of potential cost for virtual options for different grade bands including K-6 or K-3 with 4-6. She shared that for those superintendents that are interested in the concept, there will be a webinar from AAEA on February 25th that will cover the content. Additional detailed will be shared as they are developed.

Director Contract: at 2:18 the meeting went into executive session. At 2:30 the meeting was called back into session where Robert Poole made a motion to extend Ms. Bailey's contract for three years and to give a \$2000 a year raise. The motion was seconded by Bobby Hart. Motion passed

With no other business, Robert Poole made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Bobby Hart. The meeting was adjourned.