

## **Southwest Arkansas Education Cooperative Board's Minutes December 9, 2020**

**Schools present via Zoom:** Fouke, Hope, Blevins, Lafayette- Opal Anderson (Proxy), Genoa, Texarkana, Nevada- Tonda Pennington (proxy), Prescott- Angie Bryant (proxy), Spring Hill

**Schools not present:** None

**Co-op staff present via Zoom:** Phoebe Bailey, Monica Morris, Eva Wood, Robin Applegate

**Guests present:** Dale Query, Dennis Copeland: via Zoom

The meeting was called to order by President Jim Buie.

Bobby Hart made a motion to approve the board minutes from November and seconded by Tonda Pennington. The minutes were approved.

Bobby Hart made a motion to approve the financial and expenditure report from November and seconded by Tonda Pennington. The motion passed.

### **STATE AND FEDERAL UPDATES:** Phoebe Bailey

- Ms. Bailey shared the site to view bills for the upcoming Legislative session along with a listing of members of the House and Senate education committees.
- AAEA legislative committees feel that educating everyone on Dark Store is key to understanding what could possibly happen. There is interest in a possible study to make legislators aware of what will happen if Walmart wins so they will be aware of the possible consequences. Dr. Abernathy advises visiting with your legislators to get support and commitment to pass the proposed bill.
- Computer Science draft bill is out with DESE support. They have requested feedback from AAEA. By the 2023-2024 school year all districts would be required to have certified teacher at each site. This aspect seems to be biggest issue with the additional cost and lack of certified applicants for the positions.
- Hold Harmless bill is being drafted. There is no major opposition expected.
- A proposal is coming from School Plant Manager group requiring each district to have a Certified Facilities Director
- We anticipate new Secretary of Education to be announced by incoming Biden administration this month.
- The new administration is proposing additional funds for Covid, Title I, broadband and facilities
- ESF Geo Technologies is offering a discount price is districts in the cooperative want to have them work on the redistricting required after each census. They would provide maps, tables and a legal description to be given to state and local officials. If your district is interested in Geo Tech, please let Ms. Bailey know.

### **TEACHER CENTER UPDATES:** Monica Morris

#### **Standards and Assessment**

- There are no waivers for 2021 testing, and the Arkansas testing dates have not changed.
- There will be no remote testing options for Statewide Summative Assessment.
- NAEP has been postponed to 2021-2022.
- Arkansas A.W.A.R.E. mini-grant opportunity - \$10,000.00 to support mental health services, awareness, trauma informed practices.

### **TESS/LEADS/Licensure/Mentoring**

- Increase in early December teacher retirements – if district has someone serving as an intern, the intern can be used as a long-term substitute.

### **Other information:**

- 12/02/2020 update to school employee COVID-19 emergency leave – deadline for claim submissions is December 18, 2020.

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS:** Dale Query, AREA Director and Dennis Copeland joined us from Arkansas Rural Education Association and discussed various issues affecting Arkansas educators. Additional information from them may be attained by emailing Mr. Query at [dalearea@gmail.com](mailto:dalearea@gmail.com), or by phone at 870-421-4064. Mr. Copeland may be contacted at [denniswcopeland@gmail.com](mailto:denniswcopeland@gmail.com) or by phoning 479-670-5073.

With no other business, motion to adjourn was made by Tonda Pennington and seconded by Becky Kesler. Motion passed.