

**Minutes
State Board Meeting
May 13, 2026**

Present: Adrienne Woods, Chair; Dr. Aaron Abbott; Dr. Gary Arnold; Ken Bragg; David Peacock; Randy Henderson; Leigh Keener; Jeanie Wilcoxon, 2025 Teacher of the Year; Jacob Oliva, ADE Secretary.

Absent: Lisa Hunter, Vice Chair; Jeff Wood

The Arkansas State Board of Education (State Board) met Wednesday, May 13, 2026. Adrienne Woods called the meeting to order at 2:03 PM, followed by a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

**May 14, 2026
Time Reconvened 12:31 PM**

Present: Adrienne Woods, Chair; Dr. Aaron Abbott; Dr. Gary Arnold; Ken Bragg; David Peacock; Randy Henderson; Leigh Keener; Jeff Wood; Jeanie Wilcoxon, 2025 Teacher of the Year; Jacob Oliva, ADE Secretary.

Absent: Lisa Hunter, Vice Chair

Adrienne Woods called the second day of the State Board meeting to order at 12:32 PM, followed by a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognition

V.1. Arkansas State Spelling Bee Champion — Karthik Dalai

Item V.1. was presented by Secretary Jacob Oliva. Present were Karthik Dalai, East Hills Middle School, Greenwood, AR and his parents.

Karthik Dalai, a sixth grader from East Hills Middle School in Greenwood, won the 2026 Arkansas State Spelling Bee, earning a spot at the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C. The national competition will take place May 26-28.

V.2. *Tiger Talk* — Springdale School District's John Tyson Elementary School

Item V.2. was presented by Secretary Jacob Oliva. Present were Dr. Shelly Poage, Principal; Jennifer Boogaart, EAST Program Facilitator and *Tiger Talk* hosts from grade 4: Yaretzi Araujo and Witten Spencer and from grade 5: Janette Perez and Roderick Jello.

The students of John Tyson Elementary School of Innovation in Springdale have created an award-winning podcast called *Tiger Talk*, produced entirely by fourth and fifth graders in the school's EAST program. Their work has earned significant recognition: *Tiger Talk* won Kids and Family Podcast of the Year at the 2025 ARKAST Podcast Festival, and two students, Janette Perez and Emerie Johnson, received individual awards for their podcasting talents.

V.3. Arkansas State Science Olympiad Champions – LISA Academy West Middle School

Item V.3. was presented by Secretary Jacob Oliva. Also present were coaches Clair Hartle and Sevin Pektas, as well as the Lisa Academy West Middle School student Science Olympiad champions.

The Science Olympiad team at LISA Academy West Middle School won the Arkansas State Science Olympiad Championship in March. They will go on to compete at the Science Olympiad National Tournament at the University of Southern California on May 22-23. The national tournament brings together the top middle and high school Science Olympiad teams from across the country to compete in a spectrum of science and engineering challenges.

V.4. NASA TechRise Student Challenge Arkansas Delegate – Lisa Academy West Middle School

Item V.4. was presented by Secretary Jacob Oliva. Also present from Lisa Academy West Middle School were Coach Julie Hartle, Gifted & Talented Coordinator, as well as the delegates of the NASA TechRise Student Challenge.

The NASA TechRise Student Challenge is a unique opportunity for 6th-12th grade students to apply STEM skills in real-world research by proposing experiments for flight on high-altitude balloons or suborbital spacecraft. Students gain invaluable hands-on experience in engineering, computing, data collection, and aerospace concepts as they turn their ideas into flight-ready payloads. LISA West Middle School's AlterViolet project stood out among hundreds of submissions nationwide for its creativity, scientific merit, and engineering design. This winning team, the only one chosen in the state of Arkansas, will move on to have their experiment tested on a suborbital flight this summer.

V.5. 2026 United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) Delegates

Item V.5. was presented by Dr. Kiffany Pride, Assistant Commissioner - Office of Learning Services. Also present was Eric Tang, Central High School, Little Rock, AR, and his parents. Additionally, present from Central High School were Dr. Nancy Rousseau, Principal; Kim Williams, Counselor; Manivitha Narasimhan, Bentonville High School, as well as both her father and grandfather.

The United States Senate Youth Program was created by Senate resolution 324 in 1962 to increase young Americans' understanding of the interrelationships of the three branches of government, learn the caliber and responsibilities of federally-elected and appointed officials, and emphasize the vital importance of democratic decision-making not only for America but for people around the world.

The following high school seniors have been named 2026 USSYP Student Delegates from Arkansas:

- Manvitha Narasimhan - Bentonville
- Eric Tang - Little Rock

Changes to Agenda

Pulled

Action Agenda Item VIII.7. Request for Waiver — LA-25-004 — Jacqueline Mills

New Business

None

Action Agenda

VIII.1. Approval of Revised Career and Technical Education Standards

Item VIII.1. was presented by Ross White, Director, Career and Technical Education.

In January 2023, Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders issued the Executive Order to Prioritize LEARNS, directing the Arkansas Department of Education (Department) to ensure students are prepared for today's workforce. As part of this work, the Department conducted a statewide review of career pathways to ensure programs align with current workforce needs, student outcomes, and high-demand occupations. This review resulted in a comprehensive update of Career and Technical Education pathways, requiring more than 100 sets of standards to be reviewed, aligned, and updated to better serve Arkansas students and employers.

VIII.1. Approval of Revised Career and Technical Education Standards *(continued)*

The Division of Career and Technical Education requested approval of revised standards for 19 courses.

- Career Development 399280
- Career Exploration 399410
- College and Career Readiness 493880
- L1 - Introduction to Agriculture 491150
- L1 - Introduction To Aviation
- L1- Introduction to Arkansas Tourism and Recreation
- L2 - Agribusiness I – 491030
- L2 - Agricultural Mechanics and Fabrication 491390
- L2 - Animal Science I – 491180
- L2 - Aviation I
- L2 - Plant Science I – 491340
- L2- Arkansas Tourism and Recreation I
- L3 - Agribusiness II – 491300
- L3 - Agricultural Fabrication Metals 491380
- L3 - Agricultural Fabrication Structures 491410
- L3 - Animal Science II – 491010
- L3 - Aviation II Flight
- L3 - Aviation II Mechanics
- L3 - Plant Science II – 490800
- 5-14-26 State Board Standards

A motion to approve revised standards for 19 courses was made by Ken Bragg, seconded by Randy Henderson. The motion unanimously passed.

VIII.2. Consideration of Request to Release the Rules Governing Public School Policies Relating to Overnight Travel and Use of Public School Lavatories for Public Comment

Item VIII.2. was presented by Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner.

The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education requested the Rules Governing Public School Policies Relating to Overnight Travel and Use of Public School Lavatories be released for public comment. This amendment reflects changes made by Act 119 of 2025.

A motion to approve the Rules Governing Public School Policies Relating to Overnight Travel and Use of Public School Lavatories for release for public comment was made by Dr. Aaron Abbott, seconded by Leigh Keener. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII.3. Consideration of Request to Release the Rules Governing Grading and Course Credit for Public Comment

Item VIII.3. was presented by Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner.

The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education requested the Rules Governing Grading and Course Credit be released for public comment. This amendment reflects changes made by Acts 237, 654, 635 of 2023 and Acts 165 and 341 of 2025.

A motion to approve the Rules Governing Grading and Course Credit for release for public comment was made by David Peacock, seconded by Dr. Aaron Abbott. The motion unanimously passed.

VIII.4. Consideration of Request to Release the Rules Governing Consolidation and Annexation of School Districts for Public Comment and to Adopt the Amendment as Emergency Rules

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

The State Board was requested to approve the amendments as emergency rules and to approve the release of the amendments for public comment as part of the permanent rulemaking process.

The amendments updated the provisions governing consolidation and annexation incentive funding to reflect a new law governing the detachment of an isolated school district.

A motion to approve the amended Rules Governing Consolidation and Annexation of School Districts as emergency rules and to release the emergency rules for public comment was made by Ken Bragg, seconded by Randy Henderson. The motion unanimously passed.

VIII.5. Consideration of Request to Release the Rules Governing the Course Choice Program for Public Comment

Item VIII.5. was presented by Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner.

The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education requested the Rules Governing the Course Choice Program be released for public comment. This rule is being promulgated pursuant to the requirements of Act 237 of 2023, § 20 and Act 730 of 2025.

A motion to approve the Rules Governing the Course Choice Program for release for public comment was made by Dr. Aaron Abbott, seconded by David Peacock. The motion unanimously passed.

VIII.6. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Professional Licensure Standards Board for Case No. 25-293 - Derrick Cook

Item VIII.6. was presented by Whitney James, Attorney, Public Licensure Standards Board. Also present were Derrick Cook, educator and Cody Kees, Attorney, Bequette, Billings & Kees P.A.

A motion to find that Derrick Cook, educator, violated Standards 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b the Code of Ethics was made by Leigh Keener, seconded by Ken Bragg. The motion unanimously passed.

A motion to modify the sanctions of the Ethics Hearing Committee to three (3) years probation, training and coursework, explanation of how to apply training to practice, and completion of an anger management course, with no fine was made by David Peacock, seconded by Randy Henderson. After roll call, the motion passed with a vote of 5 Yes to 1 No (Jeff Wood).

Roll Call – Sanctions

Dr. Aaron Abbott	Yes
Ken Bragg	Yes
Randy Henderson	Yes
Leigh Keener	Yes
David Peacock	Yes
Jeff Wood	No

A motion to adopt the rationale of the Ethics subcommittee was made by Leigh Keener, seconded by Dr. Aaron Abbott. The motion unanimously passed.

VIII.7. Request for Waiver — LA-25-004 — Jacqueline Mills – Pulled

VIII.8. Nomination and Election of 2026-2027 State Board Officers

State Board of Education members nominated and elected State Board officers. The term for newly elected officers begins July 1, 2026, and ends on June 30, 2027.

A motion to elect Randy Henderson as Chair of the 2026-2027 State Board was made by Jeff Wood, seconded by Leigh Keener. The motion unanimously passed.

A motion to elect Dr. Gary Arnold as Vice Chair of the 2026-2027 State Board was made by Ken Bragg, seconded by Dr. Aaron Abbott. The motion unanimously passed.

Consent Agenda

1. Minutes
2. Review of Loan and Bond Applications
3. District Accreditation Recommendations
4. District Conversion Charter Application —Searcy County School District
5. Renewal of Charter for Don Tyson School of Innovation
6. Professional Licensure Standards Board —Case 19-106 Kyle Kempf — Written Reflections

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Dr. Aaron Abbott, seconded by Ken Bragg. The motion unanimously passed.

Public Comments

The State Board heard public comments from:

- Julius Wright
- Charline Wright
- Eric Mayfield

Adjournment

Adrienne Woods, Chair, adjourned the State Board meeting at 2:14 PM.

Minutes recorded by Angela Scaife.

Jacob Oliva, Secretary
Arkansas Department of Education

Adrienne Woods, Chair
State Board of Education