

ARKANSAS HEAD START ASSOCIATION
DIRECTORS/STAFF/PARENTS/FRIENDS CLASS MEETING

Wednesday, March 19, 2025, 11:00 am-1:00 pm

Minutes

Angela Blankenship called the meeting to order at 11:00 am. The following members participated in the meeting: Christie Campbell, Shirley Pulliam, Angela Blankenship, Whitley Bryant, Jackie Burton, Teona Ford, Jennifer Thomas, Heather Johnson, Sara Wilhite, Cheryl Covington, Latasha Dodd, Myra Wood, Sandy Aguirre, Guests: Jackie Govan, Deana Howell, Karen McNamara, Michelle Lombardo, Danielle Benedict, Bonnie Faitak and Kelly Conroe

Consideration of Agenda: Angela Blankenship asked for consideration of the agenda. Jackie Govan requested the addition of the following under New Business-E. Directors Retreat

Approval of Minutes: Angela Blankenship asked the committee to review the minutes. *Jackie Burton made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Shirley Pulliam seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried.*

Guest Speakers:

A. Bonnie Faitak, Senior Director, UAMS Institute of Community Health and Innovation and Kelly Conroy, Associate Director, Mobile Health, UAMS NWA Regional Campus: Bonnie Faitak shared information on the Community Health Worker Training Program. Head Start staff would be a perfect fit for the program that offers free two-week training with a year of mentorship as well as a stipend for participants. At the end of the year, participants may have an option to become certified. Kelly Conroy shared information about UAMS Mobile Units that can travel anywhere in the state, wherever care is most needed. They offer services and screenings to anyone who attends our Mobile Health events, including: Blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes screenings, Colorectal cancer screening kits, Vaccinations (COVID-19 and flu), Health insurance enrollment, Referrals to prenatal care, and Connection to ongoing medical care, programs and more

B. Danielle Benedict, Director of Business Development and Channel Relations, Inspire Care 360: She shared information about Inspire 360 an online platform that provides quality professional development and CEU's for CDAs with over 200 hours of instruction available including an Early Childhood Education University.

<https://www.inspirecare360.com/>

C. Michelle Lombardo, The Organ Wise Guys: She shared information about the evidenced based curriculum that helps with health and academic outcomes in early childhood. The curriculum is built around the Organ Wise Doll that includes lessons about the removable body parts that live inside the doll. The digital platform includes lesson plans and tools to help teachers with no prep work. Michelle or Karen Macnamara can give you free access for a month to become familiar with the program. They offer discounts for Head Start programs. Digital access is \$250 per center. The starter kits with dolls and materials are \$395. The activity books are \$2.98 each. <https://organwiseguys.com/>

Old Business:

A. Dollar per Child: Deana Howell reported that \$5,588.13 had been collected which was around \$0.78 per child. A reminder will be sent out to programs.

B. Membership Dues Report: Deana Howell shared that \$42,285 had been collected with \$1,690 due for 2024/2025. At this time, we have received \$5,030 in prepayments for 2025/2026.

C. Birthday Celebrations (March and April): Whitley Bryant, Teona Ford, and Jennifer Thomas

D. Arkansas Head Start Association Strategic Planning:

- **Goal One:** Jackie Govan shared that the goal is completed.
- **Goal Two:** Jennifer Thomas will be working with her committee to review activities.
- **Goal Three:** Carrie Ragland was unavailable to report.
- **Goal Four:** Sherry Toney was unavailable to report.
- **Goal Five:** Jackie Govan has identified the list of partnerships for the Collaboration Office. She will email a survey out to receive input from programs on what information or support they need from these partnerships.
- **Goal Six:** Jackie Burton, Sara Wilhite, and Angela Blankeship shared that they will be reviewing to see if we need to revise any of the bylaws, policies and procedures, and strategic plan due to the separation of the Association and Collaboration Office.
- **Goal Seven:** Deana Howell shared that a survey would be going out to programs to receive input on a document detailing best practices in collecting dollar per child in Arkansas programs.
- **Goal Eight:** Jackie Govan reported that the committee will be revising the wording of this goal.

E. Revised AHSA Bylaws-Shirley Pulliam shared that the committee would work on getting the revision with corrections highlighted.

New Business

A. The Future of the AHSA/HSSCO-Update: Jackie Govan and Sara Wilhite shared a proposal that would reduce some overhead costs by ending the lease with Union Station and setting up a home office. ***Shirley Pulliam made a motion to approve a home office. Tamara Griffin seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried.***

B. 2025 AHSA Institute Update: Jackie Govan gave an overview of the upcoming institute in June and reminded members that the deadline for Early Bird Registration is March 30th. The Board Dinner will be on Monday, June 23, 2025. There will be a Smores and Movie Networking Night on Monday, June 23, 2025.

C. Arkansas Early Childhood Commission Board Election Update: Jackie Govan submitted Shirley Pulliam's name to Office of Early Childhood as a recommendation for the Head Start Representative to the commission.

D. Upcoming Changes for Head Start: Jackie Govan reminded members that she shared that OHS and the Regional Office had lost some staff.

E. Directors Retreat: The committee discussed the retreat as well as possible content. ***Jackie Govan made a motion to hold the Directors Retreat, September 11-12, 2025. Jennifer Thomas seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried.***

Reports:

A. Arkansas Early Childhood Commission (SAC)- Shirley Pulliam is still waiting for confirmation for the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission.

B. Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office-Jackie Govan shared that the annual report was submitted in January. Currently the Collaboration Office has received partial funding for the fiscal year. Jackie will be sending out the needs assessment next week. The goal is to have 100% of programs participating. She provided an overview of House Bill 1651 which added the RISE program-Reading Initiative for Student Excellence. She shared an update on the collaboration with the Arkansas Community Action Agencies Association. Jackie facilitated a session on knowing your brand for the Leadership Academy. She shared information about legislation impacting child custody laws. Another piece of legislation focuses on family economic security. Jackie also shared that OHS sent out a memo of DEI terms that could no longer be used.

C. Region VI Head Start Association-Jackie Govan shared that the board would meet April 7th virtually. The Region VI Conference will be held in Texas, October 21-24, 2025. Jackie shared concerns about the lack of representation by Region VI on the NHSA Board. ***Shirley Pulliam made a motion to recommend to the Region VI Board that Sara Wilhite-***

Director and Jackie Burton-Staff could serve on the NHSA Board. Whitley Bryant seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried.

D. Arkansas Head Start Association Institute-This information was covered earlier in the meeting.

E. National Head Start Association Updates-Jackie Govan shared that they are monitoring the current political landscape as well as building a vibrant growing community of supporters. They are working to highlight the benefits of Head Start through news and analysis. There is a lot of focus on the immigration executive order.

Dates to Remember...

- Family Service Credential Training-February-April 2025
- NHSA Conference-Columbus, Ohio-May 19-23, 2025
- AHSA Institute-Fairfield Bay, Arkansas, June 23-24, 2025
- ACAA Regional Conference-Hot Springs, Arkansas-October 6-10,
- 2025 Powerful Conversations-Zoom-May 13, August 12, November 11, 2025
- AECA will be October 8-10, 2025

Next Meeting Date: Class Meeting: May 28, 2025 (Virtual) (Changed to May 14th after the meeting.)

Adjournment: Sara Wilhite called for a motion to adjourn. ***Shirley Pulliam moved to adjourn at 1:00 pm. Teona Ford seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried.***

Submitted by,

Deana Howell, Administrative Services Manager