Arkansas Head Start Association
Institute Committee Meeting
May 14, 2026
Minutes

Welcome/Overview: Belinda Henderson called the meeting to order at 9:11 AM. The following committee members were present: Jackie Govan, Melissa Risher, Belinda Henderson, Virginia Gianelloni, Sherry Toney, Jennifer Thomas, Shawana Miller, Shaytra Bridges, Brandi Watson, Whitley Bryant, Shirley Pulliam, Sandy Borreson, Melinda Calhoun, Jackie Burton, Sarah Wilhite, and Deana Howell.

Consideration of Agenda: There were no changes to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes*: Melissa Risher made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted Shaytra Bridges seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried*.

Arkansas Head Start Institute Information: Jackie Govan shared a reminder of the following information:

- 2026 Institute Planned Information Dates: June 8-10, 2026
- Theme: "Leading Change, Strengthening Unity & Honoring Individuality"
- Location: Wyndham Grand Executive Center (formerly Holiday Inn Airport) Little Rock, AR

Registration Update: Jackie Govan shared that registration is still extremely low and encouraged programs to register for the institute. She shared that if we do not meet 85% of room occupancy, we may have to pay an attrition fee.

Confirmed Speakers: The keynote speaker for the School Readiness Summit will be Dr. Robert Lemon. Adam White will be the keynote speaker for the opening session. The closing session will be a legislative panel featuring Arkansas Legislators.

Institute Schedules and Agendas: Jackie Govan gave an overview of the schedule and agendas. She shared that we will not print the program booklet. The program will be emailed, and an interactive schedule will be available online. The Class Meetings will have an assigned facilitator. The Exhibitors will be located in the atrium. We currently have four silent auction basket themes submitted. The Silent Auction set up in the area above the exhibits. Jackie Govan shared that all session time slots have been filled.

Awards and Recognitions: Jackie Govan shared that the program with the highest registration will receive stipends and recognition at a general session. Degreed Staff and the Best of the Best will be honored at the closing session luncheon.

2027 Arkansas Head Start Association's and Southwest Regional Conference: Jackie Govan shared a proposed theme-Exploring New Possibilities: Bridges to Purpose with logo and dates-September 27-September 30, 2027. The location will be the Marriott/Statehouse Convention Center. She will be on the agenda at the 2026 Southwest Regional Head Start Conference in Norman, Oklahoma to issue the invite to Arkansas for 2027. Jackie is waiting on a response from National Head Start Association to see if there is a conflict on the dates for 2027.

Things Needing Board Approval: Jackie Govan shared that the logo and theme will need to be approved by the Board.

Planning Committee 2026:

- **Institute Chair/Co-Chair:** Invitations have been sent to the Dallas Regional Office with no response. There will be centerpieces in the general session room. The White Hall Junior ROTC Color Guard will present the colors.
- **Conference Packet**: Lakeshore donated the Love Bags. There will be a pen and the Reading is Electric Book as well as other items in the bag.
- **Decorations/Door Prizes:** Artwork as well as donations from exhibitors will be used as door prizes. The committee will be meeting this afternoon.
- **Silent Auction:** As discussed earlier, we still need more baskets. Selected artwork will also be auctioned.
- **Exhibits/Sponsors:** We have 17 exhibitors.
- **Finance/Budget:** No report given.
- **Hospitality**: The committee will be providing heart healthy items.
- **Publicity:** Information was disseminated to programs and partners.
- **Registration**: Sandy Borreson will send out the sign-up schedule for manning the registration table.
- **Pre-Institute:** Jackie Govan shared an overview of the schedule for the School Readiness Summit.
- **Program:** All sessions are finalized and will be inputted into the pdr system.
- **Evaluations/Facilitators:** Shaytra Bridges reported that they need more facilitators. They will meet with facilitators on May 28, 2026.
- **Equipment**: Deana Howell is working with UAMS, BRAD, and MCAEOC to obtain equipment.
- **Special Events:** The committee discussed holding a networking event on Monday night.
- **Signs/Printed Materials:** The program will be digital, but a printed schedule, certificates and signs will be printed.

- **Prior to Institute Detail (Set-up Crew):** The setup committee will be at the institute by 9:00 am to stuff bags.
- **Post Conference Detail (Clean-Up Crew):** The post conference detail committee will help breakdown and load following the end of the institute.

Next Steps

Institute Workdays:

- Artwork-May 14, 2026
- Institute Workday-May 21, 2026

Next Meeting Date: June 9. 2026, Face to Face

Announcements (if any):

- Arkansas Community Action Agencies Association Conference-Jonesboro, Arkansas-May 12-13, 2026
- Arkansas Head Start Association Institute-Little Rock, Arkansas, June 8-10, 2026
- NHSA Fall Leadership Conference- Washington D.C., Sep 28, 2026 - Oct 1, 2026
- Southwest Fall Conference-Norman, Oklahoma, October 13-16, 2026
- NHSA Parent and Family Engagement Conference-Nashville, Tennessee-Dec 14-17, 2026

Adjournment: ***Jackie Govan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 am. Brandi Watson seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried.***

Submitted by

Deana Howell

Administrative Services Manager