

ARKANSAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
Special Meeting
May 27, 2026

Minutes of Meeting

The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board held a special meeting on Wednesday, May 27, 2026, via Zoom. Chair Jim Carr called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., with a quorum present.

Coordinating Board present:

Dr. Jim Carr, Chair
Lucas Pointer, Vice Chair
Dr. Katherine Dudley, Secretary
Carolyn Rhinehart

Coordinating Board absent:

Dr. Jerry Cash

Presidents, chancellors, institutional representatives, members of the press, and guests were also present.

Chair Carr welcomed presidents and chancellors to the special board meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

Agenda Item No. 1
Policy Regarding the Arkansas Workforce
Challenge Scholarship Program

The Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program was amended by the Arkansas ACCESS Act of 2025 (Act 341 Sections 84-87). The Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE) Rules Governing the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program were presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) for final approval on April 24, 2026. Per authority provided in the Arkansas ACCESS Act of 2025, ADHE in collaboration with the Office of Skills Development has determined additional policy to support implementation of the program, in adherence to the rules. The amended AHECB policy for the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program shall include the approved rules along with supporting details.

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) approves the policy amendment for the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program effective August 1, 2026. The Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program policy outlines the guidelines for program implementation. While rules may not change without legislative action, policy may be amended by the AHECB in response to evolving state workforce needs.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That any Arkansas approved institution of higher education, as defined in the Arkansas ACCESS Act of 2025, that chooses to participate in the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program, shall implement and administer the scholarship program in accordance with the policies of the AHECB and the promulgated rules.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the AHECB instructs the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education to provide a copy of the amended policy to presidents and chancellors, chief academic affairs officers, students affairs officers, financial aid officers, and institutional research officers at Arkansas state-supported colleges and universities as well as representatives from other approved institutions of higher education, as defined in the Arkansas ACCESS Act of 2025, participating in the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program.

There were no questions.

Carolyn Rhinehart moved to approve Agenda Item No. 1. Lucas Pointer seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved.

Agenda Item No. 2
Rules Governing the Governor's Higher Education
Transition Scholarship Program

In compliance with the Arkansas ACCESS Act of 2025 (Act 341 Section 79), the Arkansas Division of Higher Education Rules Governing the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program are presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) for final approval.

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board reviews the rules presented in this agenda item for the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program to be administered by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education or his designee is authorized to make technical changes and corrections, when necessary, in the program rules for the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program rules be approved for final approval.

There were no questions.

Dr. Katherine Dudley moved to approve Agenda Item No. 2. Lucas Pointer seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved.

With no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 9:06 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

Nichole Abernathy

APPROVED:

Dr. Katherine Dudley, Secretary