



## Division of Higher Education

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### Minutes

## State Board of Private Career Education Arkansas Division of Higher Education – Meeting by Zoom Wednesday, August 7, 2024 – 10:00 a.m.

**Members Present:** Alice Obenshain, Brock Thompson, Jack Avery, Jacqueline Brownell, Sterling Penix

**Others Present:** Julie Chavis, Alana Colburn, Tracye McKeown, Alisha Price, Ross White

### Welcome and Approval of Minutes of the March 27, 2024, Meeting

Chair Alice Obenshain asked for a motion to approve the March 27, 2024, minutes. Sterling Penix made a motion. Brock Thompson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

### Report of Private Career Education Work at ADHE

Alana Colburn reported that 110 transcript requests had been fulfilled since the last Board meeting in March. Ms. Colburn said nine new school applications are currently being processed.

Ms. Colburn informed the Board that 43 Private Career Education schools have not renewed their school licenses which expired on May 31, 2024. Ms. Colburn added that she has been contacting those schools concerning their expired licenses.

Ms. Colburn said the instructor inventory will begin in September.

Julie Chavis reported to the Board that she and Ms. Colburn are reviewing a school complaint and are in the information-gathering stage. Ms. Chavis said she is assisting Ms. Colburn with questions for the complainant and the school.

Brock Thompson asked Ms. Colburn if she had any insights on why the expired schools had not renewed their licenses and if it could be financially related or due to a lack of students. Ms. Colburn said it could be financially related. Mr. Thompson asked for the amount of the renewal fees. Ms. Colburn said \$500 to \$1,000.

Julie Chavis recommended documenting all attempts to contact schools and sending a final letter explaining the requirements had not been met. If there is no response within an established

timeframe, then ADHE will close the school unless it is known that the school is operating with an expired license.

Brock Thompson asked if any formal steps are in place to outline what is expected when a school does not renew its license. Ms. Colburn said late fees have never been charged but that is an option. Mr. Thompson commented that a deterrent is needed to hold schools in compliance and charging late fees needs to be part of that process.

Chair Obenshain suggested developing a one-page process with three or four steps with a final letter closing the school. Jacqueline Brownell recommended the letter include a statement for the school to notify ADHE if the school has been closed.

Brock Thompson said at the beginning of the application process there needs to be an outline that states the school will be sent a certified letter charging a fine or late fee if a school fails to renew its school license after 30 and/or 90 days. Mr. Thompson added that this verbiage could help minimize Ms. Colburn's and Ms. McKeown's efforts to contact schools with expired licenses.

Jacqueline Brownell recommended that when a school is issued its new license, the notification of licensure includes a welcoming note from a Board member. Ms. Brownell asked how many schools renewed and how many had not renewed. Ms. Colburn said 43 schools have not been renewed and she would get back to the Board with the number of schools that have renewed.

Brock Thompson made a motion that Ms. Colburn, Ms. McKeown and Ms. Chavis put together an outline of policies and procedures for the Board to review at the next meeting with expectations for new schools at the entry and exit points. Ms. Brownell seconded the motion. All were in favor.

### **Report of Private Career Education Rules Update**

Alana Colburn introduced Alisha Price, attorney with the Arkansas Department of Education, who provided an update on the State Board of Private Career Education rules.

Alisha Price said there are 79 pages to the rules and they have not been updated in some time. Ms. Price added that she is at the drafting stage of going line by line to make sure everything in the statute is within the rules. Ms. Price explained the steps for the approval process and said the process can take several months.

Sterling Penix asked Ms. Price to send the Board the projected changes and the background for the projected changes. Ms. Price said she would send the Board that information.

Ms. Colburn said the rules have not been changed since the Arkansas Division of Higher Education assumed responsibility for SBPCE schools and some changes to the rules will be due to that changeover.

Chair Obenshain suggested adding to the rules that schools be required to keep electronic versions of their student files and be penalized if they do not. Julie Chavis said that would require a statute change.

Jacqueline Brownell asked if there could be a guideline booklet for new schools. Ms. Chavis said she would help put together an orientation pamphlet with guidelines per statutes and rules to be given to new schools at the time of licensure.

Jacqueline Brownell made a motion for a guidebook to be created for new Private Career Education schools. Sterling Penix seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Chair Obenshain said there is a new rule for federally accredited schools called the Gainful Employment Regulation. Chair Obenshain added that one component of the report is to provide an average annual income for 18 to 24-year-olds holding high school diplomas or equivalent. Alisha Price said she would find out more details about the U. S. Department of Education's CFR 34, Part 600 and 668, Financial Value Transparency and Gainful Employment data reporting requirements.

Alana Colburn said she plans to have a draft of the rules for the Board at the next SBPCE meeting on October 23, 2024.

### **Input from SBPCE Members**

Sterling Penix extended an invitation to the Board to the Jail Resource Day Workshop on October 10 in Little Rock, Arkansas. Mr. Penix added that Chair Obenshain will be presenting at that workshop.

Chair Obenshain asked for a motion to adjourn. Jacqueline Brownell made a motion. Sterling Penix seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.