



Division of Higher Education

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Jacob Oliva
Secretary

Ken Warden, Ed.D.
Commissioner

Minutes State Board of Private Career Education Arkansas Division of Higher Education – Meeting by Zoom Wednesday, October 25 – 10:00 a.m.

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

Others Present: Dr. Ken Warden, Mason Campbell, Dr. Tina Moore, Ross White, Alana Boles, Julie Chavis, Tracy McKeown

Welcome and Approval of Minutes of the July 26, 2023, Meeting

Chair Alice Obenshain asked for a motion to approve the July 26, 2023, minutes. Jacqueline Brownell made a motion. Brock Thompson seconded the motion. All were in favor. The minutes were approved.

Introduction of ADHE Commissioner Dr. Ken Warden

Alana Boles introduced ADHE's Commissioner, Dr. Ken Warden. Dr. Warden told the Board he has been working in Arkansas in higher education since 1997 starting as an automotive instructor at Arkansas Technical Institute which is now Arkansas Tech University - Ozark Campus. Dr. Warden added that after nine years, he crossed over into administration where he established customized training for business and industry and oversaw adult education and career pathways components. Dr. Warden said in 2014 he managed workforce development efforts at UAFS and was also a dean for six years. In his last two years at UAFS, Dr. Warden was responsible for compliance and legislative affairs. He also said he is a proponent and champion of career and technical education. Dr. Warden asked the Board members to introduce themselves. Each Board member introduced themselves.

Dr. Warden updated the Board about legislation passed to extend the Academic Challenge Scholarship to private career and technical schools in the state. Dr. Warden said the Academic Challenge Scholarship is limited to students who score a cumulative 19 on the ACT and attend a school that is eligible to receive Pell Grants. Dr. Warden said that of the 170 private career and technical schools in the state, only four are eligible for federal financial aid. That limits the number of students that can be awarded the Academic Challenge Scholarship. Dr. Warden said some scholarship opportunities may open that are less limiting to private career and technical schools like

the Workforce Challenge Scholarship. Dr. Warden said if the schools take these scholarship funds, there would be more reporting obligations on the private career and technical schools. Chair Obenshain asked if any federal funds were commingled. Dr. Warden said they are state funds.

Sterling Penix said as the SBPCE looks to future legislation and ideas, those held in county jails and prisons should be considered. Mr. Penix added that on a typical day, there are approximately 10,000 people incarcerated in Arkansas. He said the Department of Corrections is trying to create some opportunities to connect those incarcerated with job training after confinement. Dr. Warden suggested inviting Chief Workforce Officer Mike Rogers to address the SBPCE Board during a regular meeting about the work the DOC is doing aimed at reducing recidivism and creating opportunities so inmates are better prepared to exit.

Nominations for Vice Chair of the State Board of Private Career Education Board

Sterling Penix said he would support any Board member who wanted to volunteer to be Vice Chair. Jack Avery asked what the responsibilities are for the Vice Chair. Alana Boles said the main responsibility is to Chair the meeting if the Chair is unable to attend a meeting. Brock Thompson nominated Jack Avery and Sterling Penix seconded the nomination. The nomination passed unanimously.

Report of Private Career Education Work at ADHE

Alana Boles said ADHE has started the process of working with a company to digitize the records received from Eastern College of Health Vocations.

Ms. Boles added that approximately four new school applications are being processed, including two CDL schools. Ms. Boles said there has been an increase in CDL schools.

Tracye McKeown updated the Board that she has distributed 70 transcripts from closed schools.

Ms. McKeown informed the Board that she sent out instructor inventories in August to all Private Career Education schools to make sure ADHE's instructor records were current. Ms. McKeown added that she received 72 responses. Ms. Boles added that this helps ensure instructors meet the required qualifications.

Input from SBPCE Members

Sterling Penix shared an idea with the Board that starting in 2024 those who can travel meet in person for Board meetings with a possible location being at the Division of Higher Education's offices in Little Rock. Mr. Penix added that the Zoom option could still be available. Dr. Ken Warden said he welcomed the Board's input and that the Division of Higher Education would support their decision. Mr. Penix also suggested the Board tour some of the facilities to grow and learn about the Board and the work of the Division. Chair Obenshain asked for a motion. Jacqueline Brownell made a motion for quarterly in-person meetings and Zoom being an option for those unable to attend in person, and to tour some facilities. Dr. Warden asked that a schedule be set for

the 2024 meetings and that the meetings not conflict with the Arkansas Division of Higher Education Coordinating Board Meetings. Mr. Penix offered an amendment to the motion to include establishing a calendar for regular 2024 Board meetings and that those meetings be scheduled so as not to conflict with meetings of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education Coordinating Board. Brock Thompson seconded the motion as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Penix said it was an honor to be part of the Board and thanked the other members for their service and leadership.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.