

MINUTES
ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON AUTISM
Tuesday, June 17, 2025
9:00 AM
Room 171, State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senator Justin Boyd; Representative Denise Jones Ennett

Non-legislative members present: Ashley Beaston, Jennifer Brezee, Karan Burnette, Rachel Dodson, Dr. Patty Gibson, Dr. Trenesha Hill, J.D. Schupp, Dr. Angela Scott, Dr. Shelia Smith, Thomas Smith, Dr. Michael Taylor

Other members present: Senator Fred Love; Representatives Lee Johnson and Tracy Steele

Representative Ennett called the meeting to order.

Election of Co-Chairs

Representatives Ennett and Boyd were elected as co-chairs.

Adoption of Task Force Rules and Procedures [Exhibit C]

Representative Boyd made a motion to adopt the Task Force Rules and Procedures, seconded by Thomas Smith, and the motion carried.

Consideration of a Motion to Authorize Chairs to Approve Special Expenses Incurred by the Task Force

Representative Boyd moved to authorize chairs to approve special expenses incurred, seconded by Dr. Angela Scott, and the motion carried.

Adoption of Minutes from December 15, 2022 [Exhibit E]

Representative Boyd moved to adopt the minutes, seconded by J.D. Schupp, and the motion carried.

Discussion of Annual Reporting Requirement and Identifying Legislative Priorities

Committee discussed having reports available by the next legislative session. Senator Boyd moved to allow co-chairs the ability to submit reports to the legislature by the August 31st deadline, seconded by Dr. Patty Gibson, and the motion carried.

Discussion of Future Agenda Items

The committee suggested exploring topics such as access to alternative treatment options, including health and nutrition, how Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is used in school settings; increasing education and awareness of Medicaid programs—including the Autism Waiver, the Community and Employment Support (CES) waiver, and the Provider-Led Arkansas Shared Savings Entity (PASSE) program; strategies for identifying and filling workforce gaps and improving support for the transition to adult services.

Other Business

Karan Burnette, Executive Director, University of Arkansas-Partners, may present information on outcomes from the Autism Waiver program. Jennifer Brezee, Director of the Division of Developmental Disability Services, Arkansas Department of Human Services, may provide an overview of the current waiver and PASSE programs. Dr. Trenesha Hill, Psychologist, Arkansas Children's Hospital and University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, may offer insight into mental and behavioral health supports.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.