

MINUTES
ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON AUTISM
Wednesday, April 1, 2026
10:00 AM
Room B, MAC
Little Rock, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senator Justin Boyd, Co-Chair; Representative Denise Jones Ennett, Co-Chair

Non-legislative members present: Susie Baker, Ashley Beaston, Jennifer Brezee, J.D. Schupp and Karan Burnette

Other members present: Representatives Lincoln Barnett, Harlan Breaux, Keith Brooks and Jessie McGruder

Representative Ennett called the meeting to order.

Remarks from the Chairs in Recognition of Autism Awareness Month

Representative Ennett recognized today as the first day of Autism Awareness Month.

Consideration of a Motion to Approve the January 13, 2026, Meeting Minutes [Exhibit C]

Senator Boyd made a motion to adopt the minutes, seconded by Jennifer Brezee, and the motion carried.

Presentation on University of Arkansas's Programs Supporting Students with Autism and Other Disabilities [Exhibit D]

Dr. Kate Mamiseishvili, Dean, College of Education and Health Professions, University of Arkansas and Dr. Suzanne Kucharczyk, Department Head, Curriculum and Instruction, University of Arkansas, gave a presentation on the University of Arkansas's EMPOWER and Autism Support Programs.

Presentation on University of Arkansas – Pulaski Technical College's 3D Program [Exhibit E]

Dr. Mary Catherine Miller, 3D Program Director, University of Arkansas, Pulaski Technical College and Jan Lewandowski, Executive Director of Culinary Arts and Hospitality, Pulaski Technical College, discussed the 3D culinary program available to individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Presentation on the Supporting Lifelong Success (SLS) Community [Exhibit F]

Ashton McCombs, Executive Director, SLS Community; Mary Ann McIntyre, Director of Clinical Services, SLS Community; Betts McCombs, Board Member & Co-Founder, SLS Community; and Ron Cook, Board Member, SLS Community gave a presentation on the overview of services offered by the SLS Community, explained the Cato Springs Village development project, and discussed Program Forge that provides additional support to neurodivergent adults.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.