

Special Report

Legislative Joint Auditing Committee
October 10, 2008

Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative Arkansas Early College High School Program

INTRODUCTION

The Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative (SEAESC), which is located in Monticello, administers the Arkansas Early College High School Program (AECHS). The AECHS provides high school students around the state with opportunities to earn both high school and college credit through concurrent college credit courses. AECHS began in July 2005 by offering concurrent college courses through distance learning using compressed interactive video.

OBJECTIVES

This report was issued at the request of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE). The request from ADHE was the result of complaints received in April 2008 by ADHE concerning the AECHS program. The complaints, which were wide ranging, would affect the academic credibility of the AECHS program if validated. Our objectives in conducting this review were to determine the following:

- Instructors were properly credentialed;
- Student grades were properly documented and supported;
- Operations of the AECHS program were in compliance with applicable laws and regulations; and
- The validity of specific complaints made against both SEAESC and the AECHS program.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This review was conducted for the period July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2008. We researched applicable laws, rules, and regulations and reviewed AECHS operating policies and procedures to determine compliance. We also obtained available documentation, both electronic and paper, to support our conclusions, findings, and recommendations. Additionally, we interviewed current and former instructors as well as current and former program administrators.

The methodology used in preparing this report was developed uniquely to address our stated objectives and therefore was more limited in scope than an audit or attestation engagement performed in accordance



with Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions, based upon our stated objectives, are briefly summarized below. Results of our review of additional program issues are detailed in **Schedule 1 on pages 11 and 12**.

Instructor Qualifications: Overall, instructor qualification reviews were not adequately documented. Instructors not having the appropriate licensure and proper approval put the students and the participating high schools and colleges at risk of not receiving appropriate credit for a course or meeting accreditation standards.

Recommendations 1 - 6 on page 4 address the improvement of the instructor approval process.

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Eight (8) of fifteen (15) institutions of higher education did not have formal documentation of instructor approval (page 3).*
- *Grade changes and inconsistent grading methods without explanation and support raise questions about the legitimacy of students' grades (pages 5 and 6).*
- *We found inconsistencies in the way the issues of academic dishonesty and plagiarism were addressed (pages 6 and 7).*
- *Five (5) of nine (9) instructors tested had exceptions relating to class size limits (page 8).*
- *See Schedule 1 on pages 11 and 12 for a summary of other complaints and the related findings.*
- *See Exhibit I on page 10 for a listing of the participating high schools and colleges for the 2007-2008 school year.*

Grades: The review identified grading irregularities that could not be adequately explained; however, we could not determine the extent of the problem due to lack of controls over progress reports and computerized grade books. Further, our interviews with current and former instructors did indicate a pattern of perceived pressure with expectations of students not to have grades lower than a "B".

Recommendations 7-13 on pages 5 and 6 address controls over grades.

AECHS Program Operations: Our review of the AECHS program identified areas of operations that could be improved. We noted student and school district memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and the course syllabi did not always agree with regard to academic dishonesty or plagiarism. Further, teacher turnover was high which created additional problems in areas such as instructor approval and instructor credentialing.

Recommendations 14 - 16 on page 7 address AECHS program operation issues identified during our review.

Other Complaints: Additional complaints were made related both to the AECHS program and general SEAESC operations. Some of the complaints could not be substantiated with available information, others had already been addressed by SEAESC management, and others were confirmed.

Our findings related to each of these complaints are in **Schedule 1 on pages 11 and 12**.

Issues Not Addressed in This Report: Other issues related to the AECHS program were identified during the course of the review. However, because of time and scope limitations we were unable to include them in this report but have provided some detail of the issues for possible inclusion in a future project. See pages 8 - 9 for details.



Other States: A review of other states and programs identified that similar laws exist with regard to concurrent credit courses; however, the method of implementation of concurrent credit does differ. Two (2) differences unique to AECHS were the inclusion of AP curriculum blended with concurrent credit courses and the partnering of the early college program with more than two colleges. [See page 9 for details.](#)

BACKGROUND

The AECHS program is a collaborative effort between high schools, participating colleges, and SEAESC. Through the AECHS program high schools are partnered with colleges to offer high school students the opportunity to earn both college and high school credit for coursework, called concurrent credit. Concurrent courses have also been combined with Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Through the offering of AP courses the AECHS helps school districts comply with Arkansas Code Annotated § 6-16-1204(c), which requires all school districts to offer a minimum of one (1) AP course in each of the four (4) core areas of math, science, English, and social studies. For fiscal year 2008, AECHS offered seventeen (17) courses, of which six (6) were AP and all were concurrent credit.

In order to participate in the program students must apply and be accepted to the college as a

non-degree seeking student. Before students can enroll in courses they must meet minimum scores on the ACT, COMPASS, or similar tests approved by the college.

INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS

Instructors' qualifications were reviewed for the 2007-2008 school year. Instructors' credentials are required to be approved by the academic unit or chief academic officer of each institution of higher education offering the endorsed concurrent enrollment course. In addition instructors for AP courses must obtain AP certification and have a valid Arkansas teaching license.

Instructor Approvals: Instructors teaching concurrent courses must have a master's degree and eighteen (18) hours of graduate level work in the area of instruction as required by Arkansas Code Annotated § 6-16-1203. Institutions of higher education must demonstrate ownership of any concurrent course for which students are reported for funding purposes according to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Concurrent Enrollment Policy.

Ownership of a concurrent course means that the college or university will provide instructors with training and orientation in course curriculum, assessment criteria, course philosophy, and administrative requirements before certifying the instructors to teach the college or university's courses.

During our review of the instructor approval provided by partnering higher education institutions we identified the following issues:

- Eight (8) of fifteen (15), or fifty-three percent (53%), higher education institutions did not have formal documentation of instructor approval. In some cases emails were the only documentation of approval;
- Reviews of instructor's qualifications were not always made or documented with official college transcripts;

- AECHS did not provide instructor credentials in a timely manner, which resulted in one (1) instructor being disapproved after the semester was completed; however, the university still granted credit to the students;
- Colleges and universities did not always provide instructors with training and orientation in course curriculum, assessment criteria, course philosophy, and administrative requirements before certifying the instructors to teach the college or university's courses.

These issues occurred because AECHS and some of the partnering higher education institutions had not formalized the approval process, did not require official transcripts for instructor reviews/approvals, and did not require signed approval forms. Additionally, instructors were added during the semester or late in the summer by AECHS without adequate time or sufficient notice to allow for proper orientation, training, and qualification review by the respective institutions of higher education.

Recommendations:

To improve the instructor approval process between AECHS and the institutions of higher education, we recommend the following:

1. Formalize the instructor approval process. Forms and reviews should be prepared, completed, and maintained prior to the beginning of each semester by both the partnering colleges and AECHS.
2. AECHS maintain a master class schedule with appropriate addendums identifying changes of instructors.
3. Formally notify both college and high school officials of an instructor change occurring at any point during the semester.
4. The Department of Higher Education should specifically address the issue of ownership in their review of concurrent credit courses at each college.

5. Partnering colleges provide the required training, orientation, and oversight directly or formally collaborate with other colleges to meet these standards as allowed in Ark. Code. Ann. § 6-16-1204.

Nontraditional Teacher Licensure: We noted AECHS often hired instructors without ADE licensure with the provision they complete nontraditional licensure (NTL) training . The NTL program requires instructors to maintain full-time employment, which is defined as five (5) class periods. In certain instances this creates problems for the AECHS program and teachers in the NTL program when students withdraw from a course because of poor grades and the teacher drops below the five (5) class minimum. This could influence instructors to ensure students are satisfied with their grades in order to maintain their classroom enrollments, which would also result in the instructor maintaining their teacher's license.

Recommendation:

6. ADE review its policy on the NTL program and consider if modifications should be made for instructors in the AECHS program.

Advanced Placement (AP): Instructors teaching AP courses must obtain a certificate of AP training in each subject area of instruction and meet Arkansas teacher licensure requirements. Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-902(c)(C) requires instructors to attend a College Board of Advanced Placement Summer Institute no less than one (1) time every five (5) years; or complete an additional training plan for advanced placement within three (3) years of commencing the additional training plan. All AECHS instructors teaching the AP courses had met the AP training requirements.

GRADES

Grades are determined based upon course syllabi requirements and are reported by the instructor of record to the institution of higher

education granting credit for the respective courses.

Syllabus: Each course requires a syllabus approved by the institution of higher education granting the course credit. This syllabus outlines the grading framework for the class relating to the emphasis placed upon homework, essays, tests, quizzes, and other course requirements. Approval of the syllabus ensures students are taught content the colleges feel is relevant to the course outcomes.

In addition to the college course outcomes, the syllabus of a combined concurrent and AP course must also include specific AP requirements to meet the rigor and learning goals of the College Board of Advanced Placement. The syllabus issue is further complicated since AECHS can have students from more than one (1) high school enrolled in a single class and each high school could be partnered with a different college. Each college could have different syllabus requirements that could become difficult for the instructor to manage.

Recommendations:

To address the issues discussed above we recommend the following:

7. One standard syllabus for courses with more than one (1) college granting credit should be created.
8. Colleges granting credit be informed if the course is being taught to students enrolled in other colleges so that they may collaborate to meet State law requirements.

Grading: The AECHS program uses Gradequick, an electronic grade book to record grades, provide progress reports to students every four and one half weeks, and generate final grade reports for students at the end of each term. In order to address complaints concerning grade changes within the AECHS program, we compared individual grades on progress reports to final grade reports. This process was

complicated by multiple factors, including the following:

- SEAESC did not have established procedures and/or policies related to backup for the various electronic grade reports (i.e., progress reports, final grade reports);
- Progress reports and final grade reports were not available for review in some instances; and
- SEAESC did not require documentation be maintained to support grade changes made throughout the academic terms.

As a result, our review was restricted to four (4) instructors. Our comparisons of progress reports to final grade reports revealed instances where grades for individual assignments such as tests, homework, quizzes, and essays were changed from the previous progress report without explanation or documentation for three (3) of the four (4) instructors tested. Also, inconsistencies between course grades for the same class were also noted. Specifically, students had grades that were not included in the calculation of the overall grade while other students in the same class had those grades included. In addition, we noted one (1) instance of students from one (1) high school being awarded "participation" points while students at other high schools in the same class were not. These grade changes and inconsistent grading methods without explanation and support raise questions about the legitimacy of the students' grades.

Grade changes and inconsistencies in grading methods identified occurred, in part, because no controls existed to validate and support changes made from one progress report to the next. Additionally, neither SEAESC or the grading software (Gradequick) used for the AECHS program had controls built in to prevent individuals from accessing other instructors' grades once they were saved/backed up to a shared drive or provide an audit trail of who changed or entered grades. Although current

and former instructors interviewed stated there was pressure to ensure students had good grades through retesting and reducing rigor of coursework, we could not document direct communication from SEAESC administrators to alter grades.

There were instances of instructors being warned that students dropping their course could result in eliminating the class. Eliminating the class could affect their full time status and make them ineligible to participate in the NTL program. Further, AECHS had additional reporting requirements for students with a grade of C, D, or F. These circumstances were perceived by some instructors as pressure to give higher grades to students.

Recommendations:

In order to address these issues we recommend AECHS establish policies/procedures including but not necessarily limited to the following:

9. Archiving by all instructors of each student's progress reports in a central location for each 4 ½ week period. This archive should not be altered or replaced;
10. Documentation of any changes to grades during the archived period be included with the next 4 ½ week progress report with approval signatures of the AECHS coordinator and responsible instructor;
11. Record availability for review by participating colleges, high schools, and evaluation teams for ADE and ADHE; and
12. Requiring a review each semester of a sample of grades for changes in the progress report to the final grade report for each posted item.

Reporting: Instructors report grades to partnering colleges either manually on paper forms or through electronic input. The teacher of record is required by some colleges to sign the grade submission form indicating they are valid.

During our review of AECHS course records we noted instances where a change of instructor occurred during the semester and in some cases more than once.

Based on documentation provided by both AECHS and the institutions of higher education, it is unclear if the changes of instructor were reported to the college since some instructors that had left were still listed on the grade sheets as the primary instructor. Also, in one (1) instance a previous instructor stated she did not sign any final grade sheets after her resignation; however, her name was signed on the bottom of the final grade sheet submitted to a college.

Recommendation:

13. We recommend the instructor of record be required to sign the grade forms manually submitted to the colleges, and when they cannot, an explanation should be filed with the grades.

AECHS PROGRAM OPERATIONS

As part of our review we also examined other aspects of the AECHS program operations. Our findings related to the operations of the program are discussed below.

Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs): As part of the program two (2) MOUs must be signed before a high school or student is allowed to participate in the program. The MOUs are between AECHS and each school district, and between AECHS and the individual students. During our review of the respective MOUs, we found an inconsistency in the way each MOU addressed the issue of academic dishonesty and/or plagiarism.

- The school district MOU states *"I understand that if a student displays academic dishonesty or is guilty of plagiarism, the student will receive a 0 (zero), and face disciplinary action including permanent removal from AECHS courses for one (1) year."*

- The student MOU states *“I understand that if I am guilty of academic dishonesty or plagiarism as outlined in the AECHS handbook and syllabi, that I will receive a 0 (zero) and it is at the discretion of the AECHS Coordinator to let me continue in the course.”*

Additionally there were inconsistencies in how these issues were addressed in the various syllabi for the individual classes in the AECHS program.

Recommendation:

14. We recommend the AECHS develop consistent policies addressing the issues of academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

Employment of Relatives: On May 9, 2007 SEAESC’s Board approved the hiring of the son of the Director at that time, as a mathematics instructor effective July 1, 2007. At the time of his hiring this individual needed twelve (12) graduate hours to meet concurrent course instructor requirements. A complaint regarding this hiring was received by ADE on August 8, 2007 and an inquiry was made by ADE.

Based on their review ADE concluded there was not a violation of the ethics statutes, so long as the son met the listed qualifications for the position for which he was hired. However, the fact that his son was unqualified at the time was not disclosed to ADE during the complaint investigation process. The Director’s son is no longer employed by SEAESC or the AECHS program.

Recommendation:

15. We recommend SEAESC contact ADE to determine if any further action is required in regard to this matter.

Turnover: The Arkansas Early College High School Program has been in operation for only three (3) years. In this short period of time there have been numerous changes in instructors in all subjects. For example, the Math Department for the 2006-2007 school year had a requirement for

two (2) instructors; however, due to a number of sudden resignations, there were five (5) math instructors employed during the year. Similarly, the Spanish Department for 2006-2007 school year had a requirement for one (1) instructor, but actually employed five (5) different instructors during the year. See **Schedule 2 on page 13** for an illustration of instructor turnover since the inception of the program. Factors related to turnover in the program are not fully known. Our review indicated that some were removed for personnel issues, while others simply resigned. Former AECHS employees we interviewed gave varying reasons for leaving, some of which are listed below:

- Work environment;
- Teachers were pressured over grades; and
- Teachers hired from out of state were unhappy after relocating.

Recommendation:

16. In an effort to address the high employee turnover experienced in the AECHS program, we recommend SEAESC’s Board of Directors review hiring procedures to determine if the applicant screening and hiring process is adequate to reduce turnover. Further, the Board should follow up to determine why high turnover rates are occurring.

OTHER COMPLAINTS

We reviewed additional complaints identified to us during the course of our review. Class size issues are discussed below. See **Schedule 1 on pages 11 and 12** of this report for a summary of additional complaints and the results of our review.

Class Sizes: We reviewed class enrollment broken down by high school and course period for the 2007-08 school year to determine if AECHS class sizes were in compliance with the ADE Distance Learning requirements (30 students per class not to exceed 150 per day).

We found five (5) of nine (9) instructors had exceptions relating to class sizes.

- One (1) instructor exceeded the 150 students per day ratio in the Spring 2008 semester;
- Four (4) class periods in Fall 2007 exceeded the thirty (30) student class size; and
- Five (5) class periods exceeded the thirty (30) student class size limit in Spring 2008.

These exceptions occurred as a result of the AECHS program accommodating schools wishing to participate in the program without enforcing the student to teacher ratios. Further, ADE accreditation is based on the number of students at the receiving high school and does not appear to take into account all other schools participating in the individual AECHS courses.

Recommendation:

17. We recommend the AECHS program adhere to the student class sizes and ADE review the combined student enrollment numbers for all participating high schools in the individual AECHS classes to determine actual total class size.

ISSUES NOT ADDRESSED IN THIS REPORT

During the course of our review other issues came to our attention, which due to time limitations, could not be fully researched and clarified in a timely manner for inclusion in this report. Some of these issues are briefly discussed below.

Funding: Concurrent enrollment courses provide college credit hours to high school students. Colleges receive State funding based upon granted college credit hours if the higher education institution receives tuition in some form for the hours credited. SEAESC is billed by most partnering higher education institutions for the tuition owed. SEAESC then bills the college the same amount for providing services and the

instructor. In this transaction neither party makes a profit; however, this arrangement allows the colleges to receive funding for AECHS students. SEAESC also receives funding to provide AP courses and high school level courses for the same students through ADE distance learning grants. In addition, the school districts also receive funding for the same students based upon the average daily membership (ADM). Therefore, funding for the same course is provided in three forms: 1) Colleges benefit through increased college credit hours upon which their funding is based, 2) the students are included in the ADM of high schools, and 3) the SEAESC receives funding from ADE to run the program.

Due to scope limitations and time constraints, we were unable to review the effects of concurrent credit programs on the state education funding formulas. If the Legislative Joint Auditing Committee (LJAC) desires, the Division of Legislative Audit will review this subject under a separate project.

Course Outcomes: The College Board of Advanced Placement, institutions of higher education, and high schools determine the course curriculum and content to achieve desired course outcomes for students. The AECHS program provides courses that incorporate high school frameworks, AP curriculum, and college level content. *We did not review or evaluate whether AECHS courses provide the outcomes desired by all concerned parties.*

Recommendation:

18. We recommend ADE and ADHE review the methodology used by the AECHS to ensure curriculum incorporates all required elements and meets the desired objectives of all interested parties.

Conflicts of Interest: The SEAESC Board of Directors is made up of thirteen (13) superintendents of school districts within SEAESC's service area. The Board is responsible for overseeing and approving actions

related to the operation of the AECHS program, which is servicing students from their respective school districts. Former employees of the AECHS program, reported instances where superintendents or high school principals voiced their displeasure with the handling of students from their respective districts within the program and attempted to influence the grading practices of the program.

Although we were unable to obtain written documentation to substantiate these complaints, there is the appearance of a conflict of interest in the superintendents overseeing a program that is servicing students from their respective districts.

Recommendation:

19. We recommend ADE and ADHE consider if conflicts of interest exist in this situation.

OTHER STATES AND PROGRAMS

We reviewed concurrent college enrollment information for the states of Texas, Utah, Georgia, and Florida. Also, we reviewed information for the National Early College High School Initiative, which has approximately 160 high schools partnered with higher education

institutions in twenty-four (24) states and the District of Columbia.

Similarities in laws exist for the concurrent enrollment programs in the states reviewed, however, the administration of the programs did have some differences.

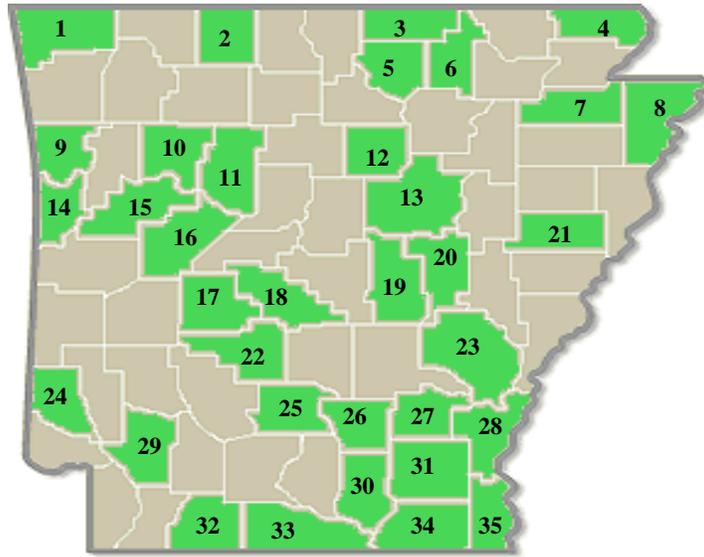
High schools in other states typically limit their collaboration to one (1) or two (2) college institutions. The AECHS Program collaborates with numerous colleges, which complicates the syllabi requirements and instructor evaluation and supervision. Additionally, some courses offered are AP and concurrent credit courses, which must include those College Board of Advanced Placement requirements and the syllabi requirements for the colleges granting credit.

We did not review the merged AP and Concurrent Credit Program benefits and challenges. The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in accordance with their concurrent enrollment policy, will review issues associated with AP curriculum merged with college level curriculum after the two (2) academic year trial basis ending June 30, 2009.

**Exhibit I
List of Participating Institutions**

**Participating High Schools
2007-2008**

- 1 – Benton County**
Pea Ridge High School
- 2 – Boone County**
Lead Hill High School
- 3 – Fulton County**
Salem High School
- 4 – Clay County**
Corning High School
Piggott High School
- 5 – Izard County**
Calico Rock High School
Izard County High School
- 6 – Sharp County**
Cave City High School
- 7 – Craighead County**
Buffalo Island Central High School
- 8 – Mississippi County**
Osceola High School
Rivercrest High School
- 9 – Crawford County**
Cedarville High School
- 10 – Johnson County**
Lamar High School
Johnson High School
- 11 – Pope County**
Hector High School
Pottsville High School
Russellville High School
- 12 – Cleburne County**
Concord High School
Quitman High School
West Side High School



- 13 – White County**
Bald Knob High School
- 14 – Sebastian County**
Mansfield High School
- 15 – Logan County**
Scranton High School
- 16 – Yell County**
Danville High School
- 17 – Garland County**
Jessieville High School

- 18 – Saline County**
Bauxite High School
- 19 – Lonoke County**
Cabot Academy of Excellence
- 20 – Prairie County**
Des Arc High School
- 21 – St. Francis County**
Palestine-Wheatly High School
- 22 – Hot Spring County**
Glen Rose High School
Ouachita High School

- 23 – Arkansas County**
DeWitt High School
- 24 – Sevier County**
DeQueen High School
- 25 – Dallas County**
Fordyce High School
- 26 – Cleveland County**
Woodlawn High School
- 27 – Lincoln County**
Star City High School
- 28 – Desha County**
Dumas High School
McGehee High School
- 29 – Hempstead County**
Hope High School
- 30 – Bradley County**
Hermitage High School
Warren High School
- 31 – Drew County**
Drew Central High School
Monticello High School
- 32 – Columbia County**
Emerson High School
Taylor High School
- 33 – Union County**
Smackover High School
- 34 – Ashley County**
Crossett High School
Hamburg High School
- 35 – Chicot County**
Dermott High School
Lakeside High School

**Participating Colleges
2007-2008**



Source: Arkansas Early College High School Program

**Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative
Schedule of Other Complaints and Related Findings
For the Period July 1, 2005 Through June 30, 2008**

Complaint	Finding / Recommendation (if applicable)
1	<p>Coop management was inconsistent in regard to payment of expenses of employees (i.e., moving expenses, training, interview expenses).</p> <p>Board approved hiring of math instructor in question and authorized use of Coop vehicle by fax vote on 12/01/06 and formal Board vote on 12/13/06.</p> <p>The original MOU between AECHS and the University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM), which was signed on October 13, 2006, was effective for the period September 27, 2006 through December 20, 2006 and did not contain language related to furnishing the two (2) teachers any type of transportation. We were provided an addendum dated May 2, 2008 that stated it was understood AECHS would provide local transportation for the teachers in question; however, it does not appear this addendum was approved by the Coop Board.</p> <p>In order to address concerns by the AECHS Coordinator about the use of equipment purchased with AECHS funds, the program was reimbursed \$12,226 in May 2008 from the Early Childhood Program.</p> <p>At their January 10, 2008, meeting the Board approved the recommendation to pay two (2) individuals as Technology Trainers for the EETT grant, with the stipulation that services were to be performed after hours / evening training as needed. We reviewed the respective contracts and time sheets related to this Board approved activity and found no exceptions.</p> <p>Two (2) of the teachers in question were placed on Board approved paid administrative leave effective through December 20, 2007, and they were paid through that date. The third teacher in question, whose last day teaching was May 4, 2007, resigned effective June 1, 2007, which was the last day of his contract. The Board accepted his letter of resignation and he was paid through the effective date of his resignation.</p> <p>Individual was officially reprimanded on April 7, 2008 for "performing tasks related to private employment" during work hours for the Cooperative. We were also able to document work related to a personal business was conducted on Cooperative computers during normal work hours after his reprimand. This individual is no longer employed by the Cooperative. We recommend SEARK develop a personnel policy prohibiting employees from conducting any other employment activity during the employee's regularly scheduled working hours.</p> <p>This issue will be addressed in the financial audit of SEARK conducted by the Division of Legislative Audit, which is scheduled to be issued in November 2008. Therefore, we did not conduct any review procedures related to this issue.</p> <p>We reviewed correspondence between ADE and the Coop regarding this issue; however, none of the documents we were provided indicated a formal resolution was reached by ADE. We contacted ADE to determine if a final decision was reached, and ADE indicated this hiring did not violate ethics guidelines. See page 7 for a more detailed analysis.</p> <p>Based on interviews with both current and former teachers, there appears to have been a perception that low grades were not acceptable; however, we were unable to obtain any written correspondence (i.e., emails, memorandums) to corroborate this. See pages 5 and 6 of the report for a more detailed analysis.</p> <p>Each course in the AECHS program requires a syllabus approved by the institution of higher education granting the course credit. We were unable to evaluate the validity of this complaint with the limited information available to us. See page 5 of report for a more detailed analysis.</p>
2	<p>Former director hired math instructor and provided Coop vehicle without Board approval.</p>
3	<p>Director provided Coop vehicle to two (2) Fulbright scholars students from UAM that were used as substitutes for Spanish classes in Fall 2006 semester.</p>
4	<p>Arkansas Early College High School (AECHS) Program grant money was used to purchase equipment for other programs.</p>
5	<p>Two (2) employees were being paid at the same time for work as employees of the Coop and the Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) grant.</p>
6	<p>Teachers were placed on administrative leave and paid after resigning from their positions.</p>
7	<p>A teacher in the AECHS program used Coop equipment to run his personal photography business and conducted related work during classroom instruction time.</p>
8	<p>Teachers were not paid in accordance with the Coop's established salary schedule.</p>
9	<p>Ethics issues were raised about the former director hiring his son as a math instructor for the AECHS program. A complaint was made to ADE regarding this issue in August 2007.</p>
10	<p>Teachers were pressured to change grades or give higher grades to students than earned.</p>
11	<p>Teachers were not teaching according to syllabus approved by institutions of higher education.</p>

Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative
 Schedule of Other Complaints and Related Findings
 For the Period July 1, 2005 Through June 30, 2008

Complaint	Finding / Recommendation (if necessary)
12	<p>Rigor of coursework was not up to college level standards and as a result students do not have skills needed to succeed in college.</p>
13	<p>Combined class sizes for some of the courses offered by the AECHS program were not in compliance with Arkansas rules and regulations regarding class sizes.</p>
14	<p>Substitute teachers were paid at different rates of pay.</p>
15	<p>Background checks were paid for two (2) teachers. The Coop personnel policies prohibit paying for background checks.</p>
16	<p>AECHS funds were used to pay for 18 graduate hours in Speech in 2006-07 and also for related books for an instructor in the AECHS program.</p>
17	<p>The Director's son, while employed to teach in the AECHS program, was enrolled and attending classes at UCA (July 2007).</p>
18	<p>Former director's wife taught a Spanish class, although she was not licensed and was never officially hired.</p>
19	<p>Various teachers in the AECHS program were not properly licensed or qualified to teach AP and/or concurrent credit classes.</p>
20	<p>Extra pay was given to two (2) employees for work related to the Nontraditional Licensure Program (NTL) work conducted at the same time they were doing their regular contract work for the Coop.</p>
21	<p>Instructor had her tuition and room and board paid for a college class for which the check was issued by the former Director prior to obtaining Board approval.</p>
	<p>Due to the specific expertise needed to review this complaint we did not review or evaluate the rigor or course outcomes of the AECHS courses. We recommend the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and the respective institutions of higher education review and evaluate the rigor of the AECHS program's curriculum (i.e., tests, quizzes, homework).</p>
	<p>We reviewed class enrollment and rosters for the 2007-08 school year to determine if the AECHS program met the ADE distance learning requirements of no more than 30 students per class and 150 students per day. We noted exceptions for five (5) of nine (9) instructors reviewed. See page 8 of report for a more detailed analysis.</p>
	<p>We reviewed payments to substitute teachers for 2006-07 and 2007-08 recorded in APSCN for the AECHS Program. All substitutes we examined were paid at the rate of \$200 per day, with the exception of one (1) certified individual that was paid based on the agency's certified salary schedule (\$225 per day).</p>
	<p>Our review of APSCN records indicated a total of \$57.75 was spent on background checks for three (3) substitute teachers in fiscal year 2008, which does appear to conflict with the Cooperative's personnel policy prohibiting this. Further, Act 1314 of 1997 states the employment applicant shall be responsible for the cost unless the Board of Directors has taken action to pay the cost. We found no indication Board action was taken on these issues. We recommend SEARK adhere to personnel policy.</p>
	<p>Documentation was provided of payments totaling \$2,705 for fifteen (15) hours of college courses for an instructor in the AECHS program; however, only \$1,103 (6 hours) was paid with AECHS funds. These classes were taken in order for the instructor to become certified to teach Speech classes for the AECHS program. This transaction, however, was not approved by SEAES's Board of Directors. We recommend all expenditures of this type be approved by the Board prior to the expenditure.</p>
	<p>Individual was enrolled in classes for both summer terms in 2007. The last day of classes at UCA for that semester was August 10, 2007 and AECHS faculty were to report August 6; however the first day of classes for AECHS was not until August 20. The instructor attended UCA in order to obtain hours needed to be qualified to teach in the AECHS program.</p>
	<p>We contacted the class facilitator at the school district involved to determine if the former director's wife had taught the Spanish class she was involved with and she stated "There were so many subs in that class that I do not remember their names." Based on interviews with employees, it does appear this individual, at a minimum, taught this class temporarily on a volunteer basis.</p>
	<p>We found no instances of instructors not properly licensed or qualified, however, we did find other issues related to the instructor approval process. See pages 3 and 4 of the report for a detailed analysis of this complaint.</p>
	<p>At their January 10, 2008, meeting the Board approved the recommendation to pay two (2) individuals each \$13,695 for annual coordination of NTL projects, with the stipulation that services were to be performed after hours and/or on weekends. We reviewed the respective contracts and time sheets related to this Board approved activity and found no exceptions.</p>
	<p>Check number 171646, payable to this individual was issued and negotiated on June 6, 2008. We were provided a copy of an "Activity Response Sheet" for a personnel fax vote which indicated "yes" votes were received from eleven (11) of thirteen (13) Board members. The response dates on the form ranged from June 6 - 10, 2008.</p>

Southeast Education Service Cooperative
 Arkansas Early College High School Program
 Analysis of Staff Turnover for English, Spanish, and Math Teachers
 For the Three (3) Years Ended June 30, 2008

School Year	Month	SUBJECT																							
		English Teachers						Spanish Teachers						Math Teachers						Social Studies Teachers					
		#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#1	#2	#3	#4	
2005-06	July																								
	Aug.																								
	Sept.																								
	Oct.																								
	Nov.																								
	Dec.																								
2006-07	Jan.																								
	Feb.																								
	March																								
	April																								
	May																								
	June																								
	July																								
	Aug.																								
	Sept.																								
	Oct.																								
	Nov.																								
	Dec.																								
2007-08	Jan.																								
	Feb.																								
	March																								
	April																								
	May																								
	June																								
	July																								
	Aug.																								
	Sept.																								
	Oct.																								
	Nov.																								
	Dec.																								
Jan.																									
Feb.																									
March																									
April																									
May																									
June																									

Length of employment for each teacher is highlighted

LEGEND:

- (1) Long-term substitute hired for the period May 6, 2007 through June 30, 2007
- (2) Instructor from UAM and two (2) graduate assistants hired to assist with Spanish classes
- (3) Teacher moved to Program Coordinator/Principal position effective July 1, 2007

