

2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINATIONS CANDIDATE STATEMENTS AND BIOS

CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT-ELECT

Amy FAith, EdS, CCC-SLP



“At work, my name tag reads: Amy Faith, Special Education Consultant, Rogers Public Schools. My job responsibilities include being department head for speech-language pathology, serving as a special education consultant/facilitator for 4 elementary schools, and being the special education liaison for home-schooled and private school students in our district. I have just wrapped up 5 years in that role. As the department head for speech-language pathology, I am responsible for making sure each of the approx. 1000 students in Rogers Public Schools who receives speech-language services is assigned an SLP. I am also responsible for general department duties, such as ordering tests, planning professional development, coordinating department processes, communicating information related to our department, and answering lots of questions from SLPs. Recently, I also became very involved in our district Assistive Technology Team. We have been working very hard to improve our district’s practices with assistive technology, including access to

AAC. This work with Assistive Technology & AAC has been some of the most rewarding of my career. We were able to obtain grant funding to place iPads with AAC apps in our classrooms with significantly disabled students and provide the same technology for SLPs. We have worked toward providing more proactive and comprehensive services in the area of communication for these students. My current role is very challenging, yet also very rewarding. I try to do the best I can to support those who are making a difference in the lives of our students! Prior to being a Special Education Consultant, I worked for 10 years as a school-based bilingual SLP, carrying a caseload of between 25 and 40 students while providing bilingual assessment and consultation district-wide. During this time, I was fortunate to have several ‘on the side’ opportunities, including working a private clinic focusing on early childhood assessment and working on the standardization of the CELF-P2 Spanish and PLS-5 Spanish-English Bilingual version. In the last few years, I have become more involved at the state level serving on a committee through the Department of Education focusing on practices with ESOL students, serving on Shelly Wier’s Advisory Council, and serving on several Ad-Hoc Committees through ArkSHA. I am committed to increasing my involvement in these state-level activities so that I can do my part to positively impact SLPs statewide.

Monica Scott, MS, CCC-SLP



Membership and participation in ArkSHA has always been important to me. I remember attending my first ArkSHA Convention as a student. Not only did I learn a lot, but it was also SO MUCH FUN!! I was instantly HOOKED! I’ve been the fortunate beneficiary of many extremely talented speech-language pathologists and would like to continue to give back to my profession. We have advanced our profession greatly since I attended therapy as a child. As a SLP with first-hand knowledge of communication disorders, I am a fierce consumer advocate and believe in putting our students/patients first in all of our decisions. In the face of the global pandemic, we have had to change our total approach to service provision in the past four months. Regardless of setting, the impact on our profession has been great. These obstacles to service provision parallel the obstacles I’ve encountered with serving my hospital programs across Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, and Illinois. Many in-person

visits have changed to WebEx or Zoom visits. I have coordinated alternative methods to conducting trainings, advocated for patient access (both in person and remotely), and promoted alternative methods of work rotation as well as for adequate PPE when working in direct patient care in order to maximize therapist safety and pay. If elected as President Elect, I commit to providing adequate representation to all SLPs and Audiologists regardless of your setting of service delivery. It would truly be an honor to serve you as President-Elect of ArkSHA.

Monica Scott, M.S., CCC-SLP has 24 years of experience working in both public school and medical settings. She is currently employed as Regional Director of Quality for Kindred Healthcare where she insures compliance with CMS Regulations and formulates plans to improve program quality by working with Acute Rehab Units throughout a five state region. She received her Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology from the

University of Central Arkansas in 1996. Monica has served ArkSHA as secretary/ treasurer and is an ArkSHA Past President (2011-13). She is a patient advocate and has a passion for metrics that drive quality care. Monica has been married to her husband Keith for over 27 years and they live in Hot Springs. She is a mother to Taylor who is a Chef and Tanner who is in college at University of Arkansas at Monticello.

CANDIDATE FOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR AUDIOLOGY & HEARING SERVICES

Donna Fisher Smiley, PhD, CCC-A



When I was an undergraduate student, my CSD professor (Dr. Martha Anderson) impressed upon us the importance of participating in and serving in professional organizations. I attended my first ArkSHA convention as an undergraduate student almost 35 years ago because Dr. Anderson took us to convention. Her example and words have shaped my own participation in and leadership of ArkSHA. I would like to serve in the governance of ArkSHA and in representing the issues related to hearing and hearing loss as VP for Audiology for the next 2 years. I believe that my experiences in volunteering, leadership and practice will guide me in this service to ArkSHA.

***Donna Fisher Smiley, Ph.D., CCC-A** is an educational audiologist and the coordinator for the Educational Audiology/Speech Pathology Resources for Schools (EARS) Program at Arkansas Children's. Dr. Smiley has practiced audiology in the areas of pediatrics and school-based audiology for 30 years. Additionally, Dr. Smiley co-authored a textbook (Title: School-Based Audiology) that is available from Plural Publishing. She served as the Vice-President for Audiology Practice on the Board of Directors for the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) from 2013-2015. In 2018, she was named a Fellow of ASHA. Dr. Smiley received a Bachelor of Science degree in Communication Disorders from Henderson State University, a Master of Science degree in Audiology from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and a Ph.D. in Hearing Science from the University of Tennessee Knoxville.*

CANDIDATES FOR VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

Danni Welch, MS, CCC-SLP



I know that investing in continuing education was the key to creating a fulfilling career for me in my journey as a Medical SLP. As I work with SLP's across Northwest Arkansas, providing in-services and support as well as providing swallowing instrumentation for dysphagia patients in Skilled Nursing Facilities, home health agencies, and Rehab hospitals I know there is a tremendous need for increased options for evidence-based continuing education. I intend to network and unite members while fulfilling the need for increased continuing education opportunities across settings and specialties within the wide scope of SLP practice. I have 20 years of experience as an SLP and have worked in schools, teletherapy, home health, skilled nursing, acute, and private practice before opening a mobile FEES business. I am excited to be considered as Vice President-Elect for Continuing Education and thankful for the opportunity to give back to our profession.

***Danni Welch, MS, CCC-SLP** began her career as a speech-language pathologist in 2000 within skilled nursing facilities in Springfield Missouri. She gained a wide range of experience with a diverse caseload early in her career as a travel therapist in Southern California. After returning to the Midwest, she has continued to practice cutting edge therapy techniques within home health, outpatient, private practice settings. In 2017, a higher calling to make a difference in the lives of dysphagia patients led her to FEES (Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing) training and ultimately to opening her own mobile FEES Business, Mobile FEES of NWA, servicing SNF's, home health agencies, and hospitals in Southwest Missouri and Northwest Arkansas. She is also the owner of Therapists In Motion, a private practice group of Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapists providing in-home geriatric therapy. She is obsessed with learning, networking with therapists, and improving as a medical SLP. She is also passionate about providing support for caregivers as her mother suffered a stroke with receptive and expressive aphasia in 2019. She has recently created a Facebook support group for caregivers - "Caregiver Connection". She is a certified member of ASHA, a member of ArkSHA, and The Medical SLP Collective.*

CANDIDATE FOR SECRETARY

Shayla McCullough, MS, CCC-SLP



Being a Speech-Language Pathologist is a position of dedication, grace, honesty, respect, and love. Our passion for helping improve the lives of those that we serve and their families and/or caretakers extends far beyond our treatment sessions and meetings, carrying over into their daily lives and interactions with others in the community. No matter the age, gender, cultural and ethnic background, socioeconomic status, functional and educational levels of our clients, we are providing them with a voice to speak up and speak out for a better world. It has been an honor and pleasure to serve as your ArkSHA Secretary for these past 2 years and if re-elected I look forward to continuing to work on your behalf. Serving on the ArkSHA Board of Directors has been a wonderful privilege and learning experience that has further strengthened my drive for advocacy, education, and empowerment across the profession and lifespan.

Shayla McCullough, MS, CCC-SLP has been a practicing Speech-Language Pathologist since July 2009. She graduated with her B.S in Speech Pathology in May 2007 from the University of Central Arkansas and with her M.S. in Communication Disorders in May 2009 from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. She worked in the area of Early Intervention from July 2009-August 2019 at UAMS Kids First in Little Rock before transitioning to a private practice clinic serving children birth to 18 years. Ms. McCullough is passionate about the children that she serves, as well as their family unit, embarking on a new journey with the Little Rock School District beginning this upcoming school term. She is the 2009 recipient of the Outstanding Master's Student Communication Disorders award from the University of Arkansas Department of Rehabilitation, Human Resources, and Communication Disorders, and the 2014 Beverly Bursk Award of Excellence from UAMS Kids First-Little Rock. She is active in the Central Arkansas community, serving on the Chapter and State levels of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and serving as the past co-lead for the Feast of Hope Homeless Outreach Ministry for Saint Mark Baptist Church. Ms. McCullough's life mission is to give back, using her gifts to advance the causes of those who are in need locally and globally through community outreach projects and foreign mission trips. She has served on the ArkSHA Board of Directors since January 2019 as the Secretary.

Christina Akbari, PhD CCC-SLP



I am interested in serving on the board as Secretary. As a fairly new Arkansan, I have grown to love everything that this state has to offer. It has provided me with one of the best jobs and surrounded me with some of the nicest people that I have ever had in my life. In order to give back, I would like to take a more active role in ArkSHA. I think I have some of the skills that are perfect for this position. I am well organized and can pay great attention to details. Through my previous jobs, I have had the opportunity to be responsible for such things as organizing meetings, planning/scheduling events, keeping records, filing reports, and updating meeting information/minutes. In addition, I get along well with others which I think is a crucial element of this position. I hope that you will give me the chance to serve as Secretary.

Christina Akbari, Ph.D., CCC-SLP is an Associate Professor at Arkansas State University. She teaches courses in research, AAC, multicultural issues, and organic speech disorders. She is also a clinical supervisor. Christina has worked with all types of clients in a variety of settings. However, she has a special love for the pediatric population. Two of her greatest accomplishments since joining the faculty at A-State include establishing the Language and Literacy Program in conjunction with El Centro Hispano of Jonesboro. In this program, undergraduate and graduate students provide over 1,000 hours of tutoring to the children that attend the after-school program. This cooperative program allows undergraduate students in her course to learn more about second language learners and multicultural issues. This past year, Christina partnered with ICAN of Arkansas to set up a lending library where SLPs and other professionals along with citizens in the community can borrow various AAC devices and/or assistive technology for evaluations or trials.