

OFFICIAL MINUTES FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING OF THE  
ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED  
ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

The Board of Trustees for the Arkansas School for the Deaf and the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired met for their monthly meeting on October 16, 2018.

**Present:** Faith McLaughlin, Chairperson; Susan Pack, Vice-Chairperson; Everett Elam, Secretary; Dr. John McAllister, Board Member; Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Board Member; James Caton, ASBVI Superintendent; Dr. Janet Dickinson, ASD Superintendent; , ASB Parent Representative; Harry Pompeo, ASD Parent Representative; Beth Smith and Will Gorum, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community, Hillcrest Residents

Ms. McLaughlin called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm. The next meeting was scheduled for November 13<sup>th</sup> instead of the 20<sup>th</sup> because of Thanksgiving.

Ms. McLaughlin said that her term on the board would be up at the end of December. Mr. Caton said Mr. Elam would also be leaving the board in December because he is relocating. Ms. McLaughlin said replacements would be in place in due time but she wanted to let the board know so the process for replacements could be started. She said this was an election year and the governor probably would do any appointments until the election is over. She said it was very important for the board to go forward. She said she had always been the neutral person on the board as there is a deaf representative and a blind representative. She said if anyone knew of a good representative to talk to Dr. Dickinson or Mr. Caton.

**18-J-013 Motion to Approve Minutes**

Ms. McLaughlin asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September meeting. Ms. Pack made a motion to approve the September minutes and Mr. Elam seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Action Items**

None

**Discussion Items**

**Parks & Tourism Hiking Trail Proposal**

Ms. McLaughlin said Mike Sprague from the Parks and Tourism was present to talk to the board about the community trail proposal. She said it would benefit both schools.

Mr. Sprague said he and Jen Haas live in the neighborhood. He said he lives over by the Deaf School on Schiller Street and Ms. Haas said she lives on Fairfax in the Hillcrest area. He said Paul Morris was not present but had met with both superintendents to talk about this proposal. Mr. Morris is out of the country and could not make tonight's meeting. He said their proposal for the trail is behind schools where there is a wooded hillside and creek. He said their proposal was to have a trail that would eventually go through the wooded property and connect the neighborhoods. He said they wanted to do this in partnership with both schools where the trail would be built in a way that would be friendly for both blind and deaf individuals. He said it would be a way they could start to learn a lot more about each other. Mr. Sprague showed the board a slide presentation. He said the proposed trail would be a two phase project. The first phase would be through the School for the Deaf and the School for the Blind on the lower part of the hillside. He said on phase two would continue around and connect to Ozark Street. It would be just a walking trail – there would be no parking. It would be set up for the neighborhood people to use it and the school residents. He said you could tell there are people doing things back there. He said trails usually drive the people out because they like seclusion. The construction of the trail would be done by two different organizations. Paul Morris who was unable to be here is the President of Central Arkansas Trail Lines. They are involved in projects around central Arkansas. They have done work at Allsopp Park, Boyle Park, Burns Park, Camp Robinson and Fourche Bottoms. Capital View Stiff Station Neighborhood Association is also available to work on this project, along with Hillcrest Neighborhood Association. Ms. Haas said there are other organizations that might want to be involved in some way. Mr. Sprague said with the idea of this being a partnership with the neighborhood and both schools, he feels very strongly that they should be able to get a grant to cover the sign needed. He said he works in a grant program so he is familiar with how grants work. He showed a sampling of different signs used on other trails. Ms. Pack asked about the type of surface for the trail. He said it would be a natural surface trail and probably wider to make it safer. Ms. McLaughlin asked if there would be railing along the gulley. Mr. Sprague said the trail could go down and cross over the gulley. He said maybe they could get donations for a bridge. Ms. Pack asked about liability for the trail. He said the main thing is that this is state property so the state cannot be sued. He said there is a law in Arkansas about private property. He said he would research the wording on the law. He said in this case it is state property. Ms. Pack asked who would have to give permission, the board or someone else. Mr. Krenn said the schools were not giving up land but would be allowing use of the land. He said they would probably need to check with DBA to make sure. Mr. Krenn thinks the board could probably give permission to build the trail. Discussion continued. Ms. Pack stated she thought the board should take the trail proposal under consideration and get with the AG's office. Ms. McLaughlin said she was very optimistic but the board needed to talk about it. Mr. Spague said he would be happy to take anyone back to see where the trail would be constructed.

Mr. Caton asked Mr. Sprague if he would send the presentation to the superintendents. Mr. Sprague said it was loaded on the school computer they were using.

Joe Register said he lived in the neighborhood and attended ASB. He said he thought it was good to talk about keeping things safe but as a young blind guy, one of the things is to develop a sense of adventure. He said you want to feel like all the other guys and get out there and walk the trails. He said to keep in mind that it would be a good place to help the kids develop that sense of adventure.

Ms. McLaughlin said that was a very good thought. She thanked Mike and Jen for the presentation and said the board would take it under consideration.

### **ASD Parent Representative – Harry Pompeo**

Mr. Pompeo said last week they celebrated the International Week of the Deaf. ASD students attended a special event at the State Capitol. J.R. Courtright organized the event which included speakers about deaf history, ASD student performances, and a presentation by Mr. and Miss Deaf Teen America.

He stated the parents were hosting a tailgating party October 20<sup>th</sup>. There will be several speakers talking about communication and advocacy. This will be the first “Very Important Parent” (VIP) event. The workshop is called “How to Tackle Life Together”.

He said many students are involved in after school programs (STEM, Robotics Club, Movie Making Club). They meet every Tuesday and Thursday. Battle of the Books is a reading competition against other deaf schools. The students are required to read three books chosen by Gallaudet University. There is no reading support or coaching allowed. There is five students on a team and Regina Dettra is the sponsor of the club.

The volleyball team went to New Mexico. They lost to New Mexico but it was a great experience. They also attended the GPSD Volleyball Tournament with only 6 players. The final home game will be this Thursday against Alabama.

He said the students would attend the State Fair on Wednesday. The Halloween Party will be October 25<sup>th</sup> in the Tornado Shelter. Students will Trick or Treat in the Hillcrest area on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Lower School boys will attend the air show on October 27<sup>th</sup> at the Jacksonville Air Force Base.

Mr. Pompeo said that was all he had tonight.

**ASB Parent Representative – Vacant**  
(Given by Mr. Caton)

Mr. Caton said the Learning Center students have been using the EAST lab to host their own Friday morning news TV show. They report the weather and relevant activities and happenings at ASVI. They added a commercial that promotes the pens they are making. Mr. Caton encouraged the board members to come by and see the pen making operation.

EAST is going very well this year. The students presented a slide show that depicted concerns they had about the playgrounds to him and the Director of Maintenance. He said it was the first time anyone had put together a slide show for him to address the concerns they have. They are thinking of solutions at the same time – they are looking into grants to help. Mr. Caton said that is what comes from student led learning. EAST students are also working on planting a food garden. They made a trip to Arkansas Horticulture Center to learn what type of plants can be grown in the winter. Two EAST students attended EAST training on how to build scenes in video games.

ASBVI track team attended the North Central Association of Schools for the Blind Track Conference in Ohio. The team worked hard and won by 60 points. Some of the students made personal best times also.

The Fire Department brought a truck for the Pre-K – Kindergarten students to experience. The kids were allowed to touch almost everything and they asked a lot of questions. Mr. Caton said he told the firemen about the sprinkler system put in Shults House. They wanted to see it and they were very pleased to see that in place.

The Secondary students attended a play at Maumelle High School. The play focused on several poems and stories by Edgar A. Poe. It was directed by a Tony Award winning director. The play had a lot of great sound effects.

ASBVI hosted the second annual Cane Quest last week and it was a huge success. There were 18 students participating in the 11 skill stations set up around campus. Yesterday was White Cane Safety Day. Five of our students went to World Services to demonstrate their orientation and mobility skills.

The Air Force band is coming October 25<sup>th</sup> to play for the students. Mr. Caton said administration had met with a representative of Close Up in hopes of that program being reintroduced to ASBVI students. He said ASBVI would also be going to State Fair Wednesday.

Mr. Caton said October 24<sup>th</sup> is Opioid Awareness Day. The 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders will be participating in a statewide showing of "Chasing the Dragon" which is a documentary made by the FBI and Drug Enforcement Association that features true stories of people that have dealt with the opioid epidemic.

### **Governor's Reorganization**

Ms. McLaughlin said she knew the change was to put both schools under the ADE. Dr. Dickinson said when the Governor made his announcement for his transformation, it was a little different than expected. She said they expected to be merged together and to be under ADE. She said the Governor did not choose to merge the two schools. He did choose to put us under ADE. He announced that he will keep the Board of Trustees which was really important to the schools. She said since then they have had two important visits to the school. Last week Dr. Roberts and Leslie Fisker, educational advisors, came to visit ASD. Leslie is the liaison for the higher education and Dr. Roberts is the liaison between the Governor and ADE. They spend 2-3 hours at ASD touring the campus talking about the strengths and challenge areas. She said today she had two visitors from ADE, Mr. Lester and Ms. Coffman. They toured the school.

Mr. Caton said they have not visited ASB but he is looking forward to the visit. He said he was pleased they chose not to merge the schools. He said he was not sure what it looked like for the schools when they are placed under ADE's umbrella. He said ADE had always been a big supporter of the schools and he thinks they will work to support the schools in their mission/vision. Hopefully they will advocate for the needs of the schools.

Ms. McLaughlin asked if there was a timeframe for this to happen. Dr. Dickinson said the timeline they gave us is in January the Governor will present a proposal to the Legislature. She thinks it will be February or March. She does not think there will be a lot of changes before that. She said they told them July of 2021 is when the funding will start going through ADE. She said they were told the superintendents would be reporting to ADE. Ms. Pack said she thought the details are still fuzzy and by the time the legislature gets through with it, it may look different. She said they need to be aware of it and being under ADE is no different than they have had in past cases where money was funneled through the ADE to the School for the Deaf. It is something to stay on top of and keep the board informed. Mr. Caton said he thinks it will come down to mainly a reporting requirement as well as the funding. He said they will still be a State Agency. Ms. Pack said it may be advantageous in that they will look at the teachers and be helpful.

Mr. Caton said that may be a reason they are coming to the schools. He said he knew the ADE has made an effort to change people's perception of not just being in compliance but wanting to help the schools. Mr. Porter said the ADE is similar to the school as being part of Teacher Retirement. Stacey said she attended the Governor's press conference and he said there would be no changes to insurance or retirement

There being no further business of Joint nature, the meeting moved to the Arkansas School for the Deaf agenda.

  
Faith McLaughlin, Chair

  
Everett, Elam, Secretary

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ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

The Board of Trustees for the Arkansas School for the Deaf met for their monthly meeting on October 16, 2018.

**Present:** Faith McLaughlin, Chairperson; Susan Pack, Vice Chairperson; Everett Elam, Secretary; Dr. John McAllister, Board Member; Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Board Member; , ASB Parent Representative; Harry Pompeo, ASD Parent Representative; James Caton, ASBVI Superintendent; Dr. Janet Dickinson, ASD Superintendent; Beth Smith and Will Gorum, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community, Hillcrest Residents

**18-D-014 Motion to Approve Consent Items**

Ms. McLaughlin asked for a motion to approve the consent items to include the minutes, financial statement and personnel items. Mr. Elam made a motion to approve the consent items and Dr. Atcherson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Action Items**  
**Approval of Annual Equity Compliance Report**  
**Statement of Assurance**

Mr. Porter said the report has to be completed every two years. The said it involves looking at student enrollment, advance placement classes as far as SMART core classes, and discipline records. Dr. Dickinson said it just requires board signatures.

Dr. Dickinson said they have been working very diligently on Silent Sunday on November 4<sup>th</sup>. Stacey said this year they are getting a lot of campus support. She said a lot of the event will be the same. They will have the art auction this year (done by deaf artists). She said tickets are electronic this year. This is the 29<sup>th</sup> year for Silent Sunday.

Dr. Dickinson said another event coming soon is “Taste by Twilight” sponsored by Arkansas Hands & Voices Board. She handed invitations to the board for the event. She said last year they honored Dr. Atcherson. This year the board is recognizing ASD’s Karen Lange. It is October 25<sup>th</sup> at Union Station.

Dr. Dickinson said ASD is working on their accreditation. Part of it will be walking through classrooms. She said ASD is following the model where teachers go into each other’s classrooms.

Dr. Dickinson said they have been working hard on the Data Project. She asked Mr. Krenn to talk regarding where they are on the project. Mr. Krenn said it is a huge project. He said they have completed about 80% of the piping from one side of the campus to Lower School. Depending on the weather, they are hoping to be done with burying the pipes for the fiber. They are in the process of running the fiber to the buildings on the half they haven't completed. He said there is one area that may have to be ripped back out and rerouted depending on how much foundation is under the sidewalk. He said they are ahead of schedule. This project will allow one building to stand alone so if one building goes out the whole campus still functions. He said now if one building goes out, half the campus won't function. Everything will be underground when this project is finished.

Dr. Dickinson said next month on November 13<sup>th</sup> she will be having her Open House after the board meeting. Hazel (bus) will be there and will be available for a ride to her house if anyone wanted to ride.

There being no further business for the Arkansas School for the Deaf, the meeting moved to the agenda for the Arkansas School for the Blind.

  
Faith McLaughlin, Chair

  
Everett Elam, Secretary



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**18-B-014 Motion to Approve Consent Items**

Ms. McLaughlin asked for a motion to approve the consent items to include the minutes, financial statement and personnel items. Dr. McAllister made a motion to approve the consent items and Dr. Atcherson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Action Items**  
**Annual Equity Compliance Report**  
**Statement of Assurance**

Mr. Caton said ASB had the same two action items that ASD had. Ms. McLaughlin said she had signed both the Annual Equity Compliance Report and the Statement of Assurance for ASB.

**Discussion Item**  
**Legislative Audit Report**

Mr. Caton presented the Legislative Audit Report to the Board. He reported that for the physical year ending 2017 there were no findings. He said ASB was very pleased and thanked Breonda Hodges and her staff.

**Superintendent Report**

Mr. Caton said ASB has both new buses in and have been out and about. He said everyone was pleased with the new vehicles.

Mr. Caton said ESSA scores were released publically this month. This report is related to overall school achievement and growth. He said he talked to Deborah Coffman when he was at the Superintendent Conference in September. He pointed out to her that the reports still show an overall percentage which translates into a letter grade and it was his understanding that both schools were waived from an overall letter grade. Ms. Coffman explained that the state can waive the schools from the overall letter grade but federally there were some changes and they cannot waive the schools from the ESSA index score. She said they talked to the governor's office in regard to making the scores public. The Governor decided those scores would not be made public this year but they will be next year. Mr. Caton said the data this year would be critical. He said he wanted the board to be aware.

There being no further business for the Arkansas School for the Blind, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20.

  
Faith McLaughlin, Chair

  
Everett Elam, Secretary