

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

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 August 21, 2018.

Present: Susan Pack, Vice-Chairperson; 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. Pack called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for September 18, 2018.

18-J-011 Motion to Approve Minutes

Ms. Pack asked for a motion to approve the minutes from July meeting. Dr. McAllister made a motion to approve the July minutes and Dr. Atcherson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Action Items

None

Discussion Items

Board Training Seminar Information by Susan Pack

Ms. Pack passed out notes from the ASBA Board Training she attended June 21st and went over important points from the seminar. She said the first person to speak was a Board Member from Bentonville and he spoke on How to be a Good Board Member. She listed the Top Ten Duties of School Board Members, Tips Concerning Freedom of Information Laws, Executive Sessions and Laws of Practice, Rules for Executive Session, and Future Training Opportunities.

ASB Parent Report by Teresa Doan

Mr. Caton said before Teresa begins he wanted to let the Board know he had made an inquiry about the appointment and it is being looked into for him.

Ms. Doan said the school year started off very well. It started with a back to school week with teachers. The week was packed with Professional Development and team building exercises.

The West Wing Round-Up was held on August 4th for STAAC – Kindergarten. The Middle School students had a separate Open House for the parents, students and teachers one hour before registration began. Everyone seemed excited to be back at school. This year the school is really pushing HAC (Home Access Center) to strengthen communication and overall academic success. ASB added 14 new students this year and the total campus attendance is 99. The Birth to 3 Program is currently serving 80 plus students over the state.

Ms. Doan noted a new class has been started this year and is called the Bridge Program. It was created to better serve students who need extra time to develop readiness skills for school. The teacher works on functional and academic skills and the Expanded Core Curriculum with the students. The program provides an opportunity for more individual attention. The Bridge students also join in with other classes when appropriate to foster language and learning.

This past Friday ASB had the privilege of hosting the debut of the documentary film “Without a Mirror” in Woolly Auditorium. The film is the story of a former ASBVI totally blind student who learns to dance. The producer and the dance instructor were in attendance. The students were able to ask questions after the film.

The annual Back to School Dance is next Thursday and students are looking forward to that activity. ASB is gearing up for a track meet in Tennessee September 14 – 16; then they will travel to Ohio for the Track and Field Conference.

Ms. Doan said ASB has a retired Shop teacher (Ronnie Halsell) teaching the Learning Center students to make pens. She showed one of the pens. Ms. Pack said it was beautiful and asked if they were for sale. Ms. Doan said they were waiting a laser to be able to inscribe Arkansas School for the Blind on the pens.

ASD Parent Rep – Harry Pompeo

Mr. Pompeo said football and volleyball training has started. The first football game will be next Thursday and the volleyball team is at Bryant tonight.

Family and students were invited to registration day last Sunday. There was a lot of positive feedback regarding ASD’s new on-line registration process. It cut down on the length of lines.

The parents were introduced to the new two principal system – Ray Boden and Kay Ann Varner. ASD is continuing with their PBIS Program (Positive Behavior Intervention Support) and the ROAR store. Plans are to grow our communication and provide support to our new families through our website, parent meeting and newsletters throughout the year. The teachers and paras did a great job preparing their classrooms and buildings for a warm welcome back for the students.

ASD is excited to launch the new Arkansas Deaf Heritage Center. JR Courtright is leading this program and will partner with the schools to include Deaf History in Social Study classes. This department will also oversee the museum as well as partnering with the community.

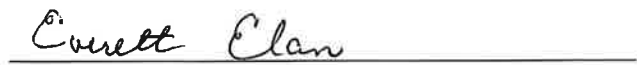
ASD has a new Campus and Community Coordinator, Ernest Northup, to set schedules for staff ASL Training. He will be conducting regular classes weekly for all staff. He will also be working with administration to review policies and practice for facility use. Tommy Varner has stepped into the role of Athletic Director. Nathan Burleson is the new Multimedia Specialist and will create and support video production and the daily ASD Newscast.

Several staff members attended training for the new laser machine which was purchased with grant money.

ASD is coordinating with the LRPD for ASL courses beginning August 9th for five weeks. Seventy officers have signed up for the class.

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


Faith McLaughlin, Chair


Everett Elam, Secretary

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18-B-012 Motion to Approve Consent Items

Ms. Pack 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

None

Discussion Items

Mr. Caton said he had one item to discuss that happened recently. He said one of the smaller investments in the Cash Account, Central Electric Supply. It is an investment that dates back to 1987. It has about \$11,000 in value (2100 shares). There is an issue obtaining June 30, 2018 statement that goes along with the reconciliation with the state for the fiscal year that just ended. He said they have been working with DFA and they have not been able to obtain it to this date. He said he did not know what was going on with the company. It is a small company and it does not seem as though they are going to be forthcoming anytime soon with the statement. He is giving consideration to selling the shares and put the money somewhere else. They are supposedly in some type of transition and sounds like we do not need to be involved with them. He said they have always been late but not this late. He said he wanted the board to be aware that he is seriously considering selling the shares.

Superintendent Report

Mr. Caton said ASB has 99 students enrolled and is looking to find one to make 100. He said he hopes to get more. He said it has been a really good start to the school year and it is nice to see the kids/staff back.

Campus Projects: Most are nearing completion. The repairs to the walls from the water damage in the main building started today. They are still working on the fire line. The buses are scheduled for delivery by August 25th. The buses are currently being tested before delivery.

Mr. Caton said Teresa had mentioned the “Without a Mirror” documentary and ASB really appreciated Eric Mann, New York film producer, who knew Lauren, dance instructor. He met Elizabeth, a former ASB student, and put together a beautiful documentary that has a very powerful message. They are working on closed captioning for it also.

ASB has a DSB vocational transitional counselor, LaTasha Mayes, who will be on campus 2 – 3 days a week to help our students in their vocational planning.

ASB received the letter from ADE Special Education Unit that the fiscal year 2018 results driven accountability determination which comes under the IDEA that the school meets the requirements of Part B.

ASB has a new OT/PT and speech service provider that is under contract with us now. They are based out of Florida but all therapists are here locally as subcontractors. They have started working with the kids.

Ms. Pack said this is the highest enrollment in a while (for both schools) – do you have an answer for it. Mr. Caton said he thought people are realizing more and more what the school is doing, how well it is done and it is the best place for the kids to receive consistent, high quality services.

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


Faith McLaughlin, Chair


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18-D-011 Motion to Approve Consent Items

Ms. Pack 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 passed unanimously.

Ms. Pack asked if Dr. Dickinson wanted to comment on any of the personnel items. Dr. Dickinson said she thinks that they have some great people they just hired to join the ASD team. Some arrived a little latter and will be on next month's list. She said they have some high quality people with great skills. Ray Bolden said Ashley is teaching high school English. Ashley has three children and two of them are students in Lower School. The new PE teacher is Erin Choate. His family is deaf and they are from Indiana. He is a UCA graduate with a major in PE. Dr. Dickinson said they also have a music teacher but she started last year. She is doing a great job with our kids and offering more music classes for the kids.

Action Items

Approval of up to \$65,000 from Cash to purchase replacement bus

Dr. Dickinson said she was going to defer to Steve to talk about the bus. Steve said he would like to ask the board to approve for ASD to spend \$65,000 on a charter bus that they could travel to and from sports games. He said they have New Mexico, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri and Oklahoma this year. He said if he has to charter bus that out to a charter service it would cost about \$40,000. He said he would hate to spend \$40,000 to a company when a bus could be purchased for approximately \$65,000. He said he hopes to purchase one that has handicap wheelchair accessibility. Ms. Pack said they need to give the approval that it can be done even though you don't have a bus but you could pursue it. Steve said yes.

Mr. Pompeo said if the plan is to buy a bus will it include WIFI. Steve said it could have WIFI capability but that comes along with another monthly expense. Mr. Pompeo asked if the bus would be wrapped with the ASD logo. Steve said his goal is wherever he buys the bus that the wrapping is included.

Ms. Pack asked for a motion to give permission up to \$65,000 could be spent out of the Cash fund to pay for a bus in the event he can find one at that price. Dr. Atcherson asked if there was money in the budget to do so and Ms. Pack answered yes. Dr. Dickinson asked Mike to respond to that. Mike said ASD has investments they can pull out of if they needed to. He said there are a few trusts or other items that have come about that they can use. He said they will get some money from DFA for the damaged bus that will go toward it. He said the only other option if they can't buy the bus – he said he did not feel comfortable spending \$40,000 to travel – so that would mean they possibly could not have those games this year. He said that is the hard decision now – to either buy a bus or not have sporting events out of state. Dr. Atcherson said it sounded like it would be a good return to try to purchase a bus.

18-D-012 Motion for Permission to Spend up to \$65,000 for a Bus

Dr. McAllister made a motion to give permission to spend up to \$65,000 for a charter bus. Dr. Atcherson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Items School Nurse Survey

Vicki Crump said in 2015 a law was passed that school nurses have to do a survey every year on what they do and report to the board. She said they see a lot of kids every day with a lot of things as can be seen on the report. She said they manage to take care of them so they can get the best educational opportunity possible. She said they give a lot of medicine daily and have a lot of kids on emergency medication (Epi Pen, etc.). Ms. Pack said the numbers were astounding. Nurse Crump said for them to come spend some time with them.

Superintendent Report

Dr. Dickinson said even though school just started they had a lot of things going on. She said they have a new mission/vision statement and motto that is hanging on the wall. She asked Rick Porter and Becky Bell to stand. She said these two people saved their lives. They worked countless hours on the on-line registration system. She thanked them for all their work. She said they are hoping next year's registration will be an open house and registration will all be on-line.

She said they had something new at opening ceremonies this year. She said they talked about how to kick off the school year so they had all their adults down the middle aisle of Parnell Hall making an “A” or tunnel for the kids to run through.

Dr. Dickinson recognized Earnie’s work making their facility rental policy is smooth. If someone wants to rent space, Earnie will be here to make sure things are ready. His position is key this year. He will also be teaching the staff ASL.

Dr. Dickinson asked Staci, Director of Communications, to talk about the trip to DC. Staci said the last week of June she was invited to go to Washington to speak at the Global Education Conference. She said there were ambassadors and senators and she was one of four people on a panel. She said she was representing special schools.

Dr. Dickinson said they received a grant for Parnell Hall that includes 2 new elevators. They have been meeting with architects looking at designs. They want something that is deaf friendly. Middle School moved to Adcock Hall for probably the whole school year.

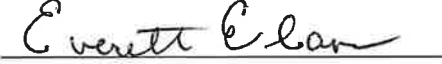
Dr. Dickinson said they have about 140 students. Mr. Porter said 24 new students. He said they are at 142 students. Dr. Dickinson said that is on campus students.

Karen Lang, Director of Statewide Services, has been working with the EDHI program. She said now there is an agreement that we are informed about every child in Arkansas as soon as they are identified with hearing loss. That means ASD can contact parents quickly. She said the challenging part is they have 60 kids on a waiting list. They are trying to figure out how to get all these kids/families connected. She said she needs a statewide proposal. She said 2 years ago they asked the Governor to include in his budget which would give them funding to establish a real statewide services system similar to the one in New Mexico. There are three parts to the proposal. She said they hope to see his approval this year. She said there has been a request from them to see if there is any state legislation that they intend to present. The request was that they consider something that aligns with the statewide proposal. They took the Bridges Bill and James had some comment from the blind community and they merged those together so there is a Deaf and Blind Child’s Bill of Rights. She said she had no idea what will happen.

Ms. Pack asked Dr. Dickinson what her idea was on the increased enrollment. Dr. Dickinson said Rick is a really good salesman. She asked Rick what he thought. Rick said there is a whole list of reasons. He said it starts with the relationship with the public schools so the schools have a better understanding of what services are offered and where they fall short. He said it is several things that all fit together. Ms. Pack said whatever it is keep doing it.

Ms. Pack asked if there was anything else. Dr. Dickinson said no. Ms. Pack said there was nothing else on the agenda so the meeting is adjourned.


Faith McLaughlin, Chair


Everett Elam, Secretary