

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 a special meeting on June 9, 2020.

**Present:** Roy DePriest, Chairperson; Dr. John McAllister, Vice-Chairperson; Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Secretary; Faith McLaughlin, Board Member; Susan Pack, Board Member; James Caton, ASBVI Superintendent; Dr. Janet Dickinson, ASD Superintendent; Dr. Priya Gupta, ASB Parent Representative; Holley Mott, ASD Parent Representative; Beth Smith and Jaime Harrell, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community, Hillcrest Residents

Mr. DePriest called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Gina Windle from the Arkansas Department of Education has joined us. Ms. Windle said Whitney was also here with her. Whitney has worked with both schools and has been working with the School for the Deaf since they do not have a Business/HR on staff presently.

Mr. DePriest said there was not an agenda but he had put together a list of items they wanted to address. He said they wanted to get clarification on some outstanding issues that need to be resolved or fully understood. He said first on his list is the SCPI policy. He said this was a board policy that required minimum level of proficiency for staff. The board would like to enforce the policy. The policy doesn't work without enforcement. He said the issue had been tabled in May to discuss in the June 16<sup>th</sup> board meeting. Mrs. Pack said she would like to go back and explain. She said before Dr. Dickinson was hired they had a very contentious deaf community that was adamant about more inclusive and that oppression was felt by the community. She said when interviewing candidates the board explained how important this was for the deaf community. When Dr. Dickinson was hired the board asked her to develop a policy and a very good one was developed. The board has the right to make policies and that is what they did. Mrs. Pack said the board wants to know how someone else could change the policy. Dr. Dickinson said she thought it was important to know that whether or not the policy is followed, deaf children's linguistic rights are close to all of our hearts. She thinks it is important that the board and ADE come to an agreement and hopefully it will support the language rights of deaf children. Ms. Windle said you have transformation and under state government-yes you are a school but you are also a state agency. She said there are standard operating policies by OPM that should be followed and wanted to know if this policy was approved by OPM. She said they wanted to make sure everything was correct and legal. She said COVID hit and the governor wanted maximum flexibility exercised – students out and not receiving services

Dr. Dickinson said she was not exactly sure what she means, but the board did revisit the policy because the deadline that was here when the policy was passed was in March. The board approved a 3-month extension due to COVID 19. Dr. Dickinson said when they developed the policy it was approved through AG's office and it was sent to OPM. She said she did not have in writing that OPM approved it. She said they reviewed it before they proceeded. Ms. Windle said a lot of this is about protection. She said they wanted to do things the right way. Mrs. Pack said they were down to so few (2) and if they wanted to they could do it. The levels are so minimal. She said the board wants the policy. Gina said they need clarification on both sides this is all new to ADE and Secretary Key. She thinks it is just a learning curve. She said she taught over 20 years and thinks all students should be taught by professionals. Mr. DePriest said how do we see us characterized moving forward – do you want them to send back to OPM. Ms. Windle said they wanted something in writing for protection. Mr. DePriest said a job description comes with certain duties and responsibilities – does OPM approve all of them. Ms. Windle said because it is unique they want an email from Kay Barnhill. They would feel better if they had something in writing. Mrs. Pack said you don't see it from a state agency but schools require certification. Mrs. McLaughlin said if the board has a personnel policy for the school it has to go through the channels. Ms. Windle said they didn't have anything to back it up and if something ever came up they would want to know when it was approved. She said there is still legal opinion on this. Mr. DePriest asked if that had been done for all other job requirements or was this picked out because it's a high profile or someone didn't like it. Mrs. Pack said that comes back to the issue that we are not a school but a state agency. Ms. Windle said but you are a school. Mrs. Pack said that's the way it has been forever but before the transformation we were a state agency and a school. She said they could fight their own battles and didn't have to go through so many layers. She said that is what they did when they did this – they got the approval of the Attorney General's office and got the okay (not in writing) from OPM. Ms. Windle said that the bump in the road here has been the transformation and these things are done in consultation through the Secretary of Education. Mr. DePriest said what things. Ms. Windle said policy, hiring, termination – agency operation. Mrs. Pack said again and again we have been told that we could go on just like we were making policy. She said they ask where they stand as a board. Ms. Windle said you are but there is going to be an extra step to the process making sure Secretary Key is informed. She said she didn't know why this particular policy caught the eye of the legal team but it was brought to their attention. She said they had several conversations back and forth about it. She said there is a process. She thinks if they could get it back to them again, have a new conversation open and transparent about why it is so important. She said to get something in writing saying it has been checked out then there should be no issues. Mrs. Pack said if you are saying that is what we should do, then why did someone not approach the board and talk to someone who knew the history in the state, education and knowledge to know why this was done.

Ms. Windle said she didn't know – this is all new. The transformation is less than a year old and they are learning as they go. She said there are a lot of new policies and a lot of kind of unwritten rules about navigating things. Mr. DePriest said that is why we are here – the board needs some clarification. Ms. Windle said she did not ever want to be at odds with one another. Mr. DePriest said they were not trying to make it adversarial. Ms. Windle said Secretary Key was committed to education. She said if there is something you need to prioritize to get his attention then they have to know about it as well so they can block off time and have those conversations. Mr. DePriest said this would be a particular issue where we could seek out his help for things like this. Mrs. Pack asked does that mean the board can't talk to OPM. Ms. Windle said she thought it should go through the superintendent. Mr. DePriest said the board has had public meetings at OPM when going through the shared services separation. Ms. Windle said she thinks that they are going to have to get the right people at the right time and have these conversations. Mrs. Pack said Kay has a long history with the school. Ms. Windle said Kay would be great to answer questions. She works in personnel and would be much more knowledgeable. She said if she could get that tomorrow. Mr. DePriest asked if that was okay and Dr. Dickinson said she would work on it and get in contact with Kay. Whitney said she wanted to point out that Kay has a new supervisor now and it might not be just Kay that has to review policy

Mr. DePriest said the next item for discussion is the Master Campus Plan. He said they would really like more specificity on what that means in terms of Master Campus Plans for both schools. Ms. Windle said she knew that at one point they had to hire a structural engineer to do inspections to make sure the buildings on both campuses are safe for children/staff to be in. Then COVID-19 hit and she is not sure where they are with that moving forward. Whitney said they were having a hard time finding someone to come out. Ms. Windle said since that time there was another conversation with Tanner from Spark fund. They will do an initial need's assessment of all the buildings and infrastructure (lighting, heat/ac, plumbing, etc.). They take it back to their engineers who find the most efficient ways to address the issues. She said at one time they had talked about some solar things but that was not really feasible. She said they know there are issues with the electric poles – Energy won't service them because they belong to the school. Mr. Caton said they did come and do some initial walk-throughs and assessment but then the pandemic hit. Ms. Windle said she does not think they finished. She said they would bring back a capital report and share with everyone/public. It would outline the things that need to be addressed. The beauty of the Spark fund is that they not only provide the need's assessment but it also gives the schools more buying power long-term. Dr. Dickinson said 4 years ago ASD hired an engineer from outside to come in and they did a full facility need's assessment. They went to every building and analyzed everything and gave them a significant report with the results from their analysis. She said that all started when the governor toured their school. She said they received their report and then were told it had to be redone to include the Blind School.

Dr. Dickinson said she did not want to throw out all of the work, money and ideas that they gathered to start from scratch all over again. She said they didn't want to spend money that has already been spent. She thinks that is one of the challenges about how they move forward. Ms. Windle said they have seen it and it is a beautiful plan but it does not include the Blind School. Dr. Dickinson said they were happy to revisit a plan with the Blind School but she is not sure what that means. Mr. DePriest said what do you need – can we get more specifics on how you want the two schools to look. Ms. Windle said first you need students and staff in safe buildings. She said the second thing would be to look at efficiency. If you have buildings and you are paying for them to be heated/cooled and have utilities running and only being used at one fourth of their capacity then that is not efficient. Mrs. Pack said if efficiencies are what are being looked for we already know what it is for the Deaf School campuses so why could they not do that and then look at the two schools jointly. Ms. Windle said the Deaf School plan is four years old and over time some of those things could have changed – the structure of the buildings could have gone downhill. She said it needs to be revisited to get a real current look today and look at the needs of the schools. Mr. DePriest said it needs assessment and analysis – can ADE provide. Ms. Windle said they would need input from the community, staff and parents. Dr. Dickinson said she thought she and James were pretty innovative and like to keep going. She said sometimes she feels like she is waiting and waiting to make sure what ADE wants them to do. She said if they figure out a budget and how they can move forward with the reviewing, plans and needs assessment she would love that. She said she would work with James to see how to help them move forward with a plan for the Blind School. She said sometimes she is not sure if she is supposed to wait for ADE to have an idea to contact her or if she is supposed to approach ADE. Ms. Windle said they talk frequently and she could talk to her at any time. She said she was an English teacher for a long time and not a facilities person – she said she has been taking the input and knowledge of the two of them and what they bring to the table. She said they would need to get a structural engineer that has already done it. Mrs. Pack asked who was going to pay for it. Ms. Windle said you all get appropriations from the legislature right. She said they have had conversations with the Governor about the Cares Act Funds and the needs of the schools. The Governor is aware of the needs at the schools so would have to ask the governor's office and the legislature for funds. She said there are Rainy Day Funds and other funds out there. She said your regular appropriations are for your day-to-day operations so this would have to be something above and beyond. Mrs. Pack asked who would pay. Ms. Windle said ADE. She said there are things at the Department level that we can leverage more than you. Secretary Key doesn't know your needs. Dr. Dickinson said wonderful comments. Ms. Windle said Secretary Key isn't here but he would echo that sentiment as well. She said they are learning as they go. Mrs. Pack said they wanted the same thing and wanted input.

Mrs. Pack said they have experts and want to be a part of it instead of someone all of a sudden making a decision for them. Ms. Windle said no one likes anything pushed upon them without an opinion. Nobody wins that way. People are much more likely to support what they have a voice in. Mr. DePriest said they are all stakeholders in how this works and it has to work. Ms. Windle said the governor appointed you to serve in this capacity. Mrs. Pack said it was one of the most beautiful things she has seen is when they had the Town Hall Meeting when they were going through the Master Plan with the community. She said there were charts on the wall in different areas of divisions that they wanted to see. Everyone on the room had a chance to go and put something on there and have a voice in it. She said everyone was on the same page. Ms. Windle said people feel validated when their voice is heard and their concerns are addressed. She said they did not want diminish that in any way. She said they have to find a way to bring it logistically all together.

Mr. DePriest said next on his list was approval of positions. He said it hits home for both superintendents. Through attrition lost key people/teachers and they have to have teachers to teach school. He said what they needed from Ms. Windle was help in expediting the process of getting the positions filled. Ms. Windle said she has a weekly conference call with the Governor's Chief of Staff and brought to the attention that schools operate on a different schedule than other agencies. She said they were currently in a hiring freeze/budget cuts that everyone is aware of. She said she thought the difference here is you don't want to lose quality applicants when you can't offer them a job. Mr. DePriest said that is what is already happening. Ms. Pack said it has already happened. She said they have been banging the drum and banging the drum and just got a Special Ed position approved. She said to get that approved their CFO had to cite IDEA in the justification for that and that the school would be out of compliance without the teacher based on IEP's. She said getting state government to understand that is very difficult. She said they are doing all that they can. She said she has been in the position of trying to hire teachers in June, July and August and they are getting other offers. She said it is challenging. She said they keep being told that after July 1 it would be a new fiscal year and hopefully will have more breathing room then but it is three weeks away. She said she knows there have been more submitted recently and they are doing all they can but they don't pull the strings. Mr. DePriest said if I am hearing you correctly it is out of your hands. She said they are advocating. Mr. DePriest asked what the board could do to help. He said they would like to be proactive if possible. Ms. Windle said if you wanted to draft a letter that would speak to the sense of urgency here she could share it. She said she tried to communicate it but she is speaking from a traditional public school experience that operates differently that you all do as part of state government. She said she has never worked in a residential school. She said having that unique voice is something that could be passed on to Secretary Fetcher and the Governor who is ultimately signing on the bottom line making these decisions.

Mrs. Pack asked about people that are on the Education Committee and legislature. Ms. Windle said Bruce Cozart, Jane English – she was all for advocating to the right people for the needs of the students. Mrs. Pack said in the past when they were on their own, that is how they got things done because they always had some real strong advocates in the legislature. She said we need your blessing to do that. Ms. Windle said everyone needs a cheerleader that can get to the right people. She said they have a process that they have to follow through a chain of command and not everyone has to operate under those same protocols so definitely the squeaky wheel get the grease. Mr. DePriest said it had been his concern that it would be misconstrued by some as going over heads. Ms. Windle said it would be nice if they were aware so if they got phone calls they would know how to handle them. Mr. DePriest and Mrs. Pack said they were telling her tonight. Ms. Windle said draft something in writing. She said you don't have paid lobbyist for your schools but you can serve in a role as ?????. Mrs. Pack said they are members of AAEA and they are lobbyists. She said they could go through that channel but as individuals they could talk to their own representatives. Dr. Dickinson asked for shared guidance for her and James. She said she was assuming she was talking about the board going to the legislators to advocate for the school but want to know the process for the superintendents. Ms. Windle said state agency directors are going to be different. When other agency directors have specific needs they usually work with the liaison, Erin Franks and she said she could put them in contact with her. Mrs. Pack said they have always invited legislators out to the school. Ms. Windle said it would be good for the legislators to visit the schools then they could say what they saw or heard while on campus. If needing extra funds expedited it has to go through the legislature anyway. She said just let ADE know so they are not surprised.

Mr. DePriest said let's talk about shared services – Tier I with ADE. He asked if ADE was making this a mandatory requirement for all agencies. Mrs. Pack said he is talking about what she wrote to Ms. Windle about the schools having to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for. Dr. Dickinson said you may not be familiar with the term Tier I and Tier II because it is a term she made up because ADE has shared services with various divisions and the two schools are developing shared services so when talking about shared services they wanted to be clear whether it was ADE shared services or school shared services. Tier I means ADE shared services with the divisions and Tier II is the two schools sharing services. Mrs. Pack said she had thought about this and hopes she is wrong but it sounds to her like you are saying you've got a car and they are going to take the car and put in a pool but you will still have to pay for it. She said the Blind School is going to pay \$240,000 and \$340,000 from the Deaf School. Mr. DePriest said his concern on this is it mandatory or are there options. Ms. Windle said there are always options and the key is to create efficiencies that work for the schools. Mr. DePriest said the schools should realize saving opportunities that would outweigh the required cost. Mrs. Pack said she thinks that is what they don't understand. The positions that are being taken are they going to deduct that amount of money that each school is to pay.

Ms. Windle said there could be shared positions that remain embedded in school operations. She said the way she sees it is if James and Janet both have a car and they decide they wanted to carpool they would both save on gas. It is her understanding that some of the operational functions of the schools could have more shared roles. Mrs. Pack asked where the money was going. Whitney said it does cover the salaries of the shared positions that were transferred to ADE. You won't be paying for those positions. It goes toward salaries like the legal liaison that is available to all divisions under ADE. Mr. DePriest asked if an analysis could be done to determine that savings will be seen. Ms. Windle said just want to make sure schools are well staffed and that the operational and administrative needs were being met. Mrs. Pack said as a state agency there was not a fee for using Attorney General Office. She said it just didn't sound like a win. Ms. Windle said when the shared services was discussed positions had identified that could be shared. Mr. DePriest asked where it currently stands. He said they do not know what it is going to look like. Ms. Windle said appropriations were approved in the fiscal session and that part has already been ironed out. What the operations and people will look like is still to be determined. Mrs. Pack asked if they were aware of it. Mr. Caton said no but if he had known about the discussions he would have asked how they determine the percentage for each agency. He said there seems to be other agencies on the list that are not paying as much as the schools are (the schools are smaller agencies). He said he was trying to understand where the numbers came from for them. Ms. Windle said Finance work with DFA. Mr. DePriest said shouldn't the superintendents been a part of that. Ms. Windle said it sounds like there were some missed opportunities. Transformation was very new and sounds like people were hit with deadlines to get things done for legislature approval. Mrs. Pack asked if the amount of money each school has to pay is realistic. Ms. Windle said it was going to be through salaries. Whitney said what was done under the DFA guidelines were some numbers established for what shared services would cost for all of ADE as a cabinet level. Each division of ADE was looked at and the amount contributed from each division was based on general revenue allocations. Mr. DePriest asked about the positions. Whitney said part of it was the positions but also the operations. She said it was more than just the position that was sent to cabinet level shared services. She said certain positions are deemed to be part of the shared services. Mrs. Pack said there were two positions from ASD and one from ASB. Dr. Dickinson said they had one position that was filled and another one has not been filled so that is funding that they weren't expecting to fill – correct. Whitney said it was her position as the business manager so it was salaries for (off the top of her head) Deaf School – if you are looking for the number you are contributing outside of salaries she would say \$220,000 for ASD and \$180,000 for ASB. She said she could give her better numbers tomorrow. Ms. Windle said similar was asked from all divisions to contribute. Mr. Caton said in terms of percentage there is still at least one other agency on there that has less percentage than he does. Whitney stated you have a higher general revenue than they do. Mr. Caton said are you talking just about GR. Whitney said yes. The only division that receives more funding than ASD is DESE.

Mr. Caton said that helps clarify that but the position that was transferred was blocked in the budget – so this is a separate amount (\$255,000) from that. Whitney said no it includes that. Mrs. Pack said that will still leave well over \$100,000. Whitney said she would say that would leave ASB with about \$180,000 outside of salary. Mrs. Pack asked how their salaries were going to be paid before this. Mr. DePriest said how it worked before they were involved. Mrs. Pack said all the people they are paying for now had line item positions-how come now you are looking for money from all the agencies to pay for those positions. Whitney said they didn't ask for any money the first year of the transformation because no one knew how it was going to work. She said before two years ago Gina didn't have anything to do with ASD or ASB. She said she didn't have anything to with ASD or ASB, nor did IT. Now that ADE is over the schools, you have to contribute to part of their salaries. Mr. DePriest said because of the increased work load. Whitney said yes because they didn't get any extra positions. Gina was doing her job plus now is dealing with agencies under agencies also. Ms. Windle said they are going toward long-term efficiencies and there may not be a clear black and white right now but the goal over time is for that to be reduced. She said she could say that the last report she saw since transformation they had seen over \$1,000,000 in savings across all divisions within the first year. Whitney said she didn't think they would see anything in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year but she does feel they will see benefits. The governor is looking for long-term efficiencies. Mr. DePriest said it is an upfront investment for future gains. Whitney said you could look at it that way. She said she did not want to get any hopes up but some of the money could be reduced throughout the year if it is determined that shared services didn't need as much money as asked for in the beginning. Mrs. Pack said as she understands it personnel issues and things like that the AG's office is for state agencies. The school related issues would come under the ADE attorney. She said are they not to go to the AG's office. Whitney said that is correct. Mrs. Pack said they really hate that. Ms. Windle said because of the long standing relationship. Mrs. Pack said yes. Ms. Windle said it is to help bring it all under one roof. She said there may be some long-term things that you have dealt with through the AG's office and ADE's lawyers may not be up to speed then you could continue on with the AG's office and bring one of ADE's attorneys in to be brought up to speed. Ms. Windle said Secretary Key has expressed this and she feels comfortable speaking on his behalf that all of that come under the ADE Legal umbrella moving forward. ADE legal can reach out to the AG's office. Mrs. Pack said we can reach out to them. Ms. Windle said have someone there contact one of ADE's attorneys. Ms. Pack said that we are a state agency and they know a lot more about state agencies. Ms. Windle said she did not know if that was necessarily accurate because ADE does have attorneys that are well versed in procurement, HR, grievances, and all those kinds of things. She said she thought they were a well versed team. Moving forward we need to learn to trust one another. Mr. Caton said the only clarification he had was that in cases there was an action filed against the school, he thought that in an earlier meeting where ADE legal was present that they said it would still be the AG's office.



Ms. Windle said she was at that meeting and was trying to recall the exact conversation – she said they needed to be kept in the loop. She said that is the bottom line and you are already paying for these services and you might as well use them. She said if there is something that is still pending that you have open with the attorney there they would need to finish. She said in time all that needs to be transitioned under one umbrella. Dr. Dickinson said with communication and legal services with ADE there seems to be a feeling of being overwhelmed because many times when contacting them it is a long turn-around time for a response. She said she thought it was because there is so much going on and they are involved with so many different agencies. She said they were used to being able to text the attorney at the AG’s office and getting a quick response so we are able to move forward. Ms. Windle said Secretary Key hired a chief legal counsel from DHS but she went back to DHS and they have not been able to fill that position. She said they are continuing to restructure their legal department and especially during the legislative session you are going to need a liaison that you can vent things through and keep you aware of changes that you need to be made aware of. She said when their chief legal counsel left it left a big hole and they had to restructure that department. Mr. DePriest said you expect to fill that position relatively soon. Ms. Windle said yes hopefully. Mrs. Pack said back to the shared services one more time. She asked if Ms. Windle would pass along that this doesn’t really set well with us. She said they wanted this to be an open and trusting relationship. Ms. Windle said the way she sees it is everyone is going to pay. They have asked for funds from all the divisions. She said hopefully over time you will gain benefits from this. She said some of these things are going to take time to recover. Mr. Caton said he was just trying to have a better understanding. He said he could understand the concept but it hurts when you take that in addition to the budget cuts. Ms. Windle said that is being felt across the board. Mr. DePriest said is the answer no to his question about being able to opt out of the shared services with ADE. Ms. Windle said the answer is no. She said she thinks the schools have some unique opportunities to identify needs you have for the school. She said it was important that the school leverage those - you are paying for it so you need to tap into it. Mrs. Pack said they are asking to be included. Mr. DePriest said you asked for communication from us about things but it is a two-way street. He said the superintendents should certainly be involved and a part of these important decisions and processes that directly affect how they run their schools. Ms. Windle said she agreed and she thought in the beginning they were coming more and then the pandemic hit. Mr. Caton said they were beginning to have conversations and work toward some things then the pandemic hit and took away the focus they had started. Ms. Pack said nothing takes the place of having HR/Business here. Ms. Windle said those positions are still embedded. Mrs. Pack said she didn’t think they had the expertise where the children are involved. Ms. Windle said if that is the case then shame on us. She said once you know better you need to do better. She said that will take them being proactive as well as you all and should have this conversation on a more regular basis.

Dr. Dickinson said she thought it was important to note that they have been working through this – there has been some good times and hard times. She said Whitney was new to ADE when she accepted the position and they are working through all of this. She said she really appreciates Whitney coming to her and asking her about things. There have been times when Whitney went to Mr. Rogers and she had no idea what was going on. She thinks it is real important for all of the shared services that they come back to the agency director so it still feels like they have some control or say so about what is happening on their campuses rather than decisions being made at ADE because we are under ADE. It just happened today actually – she saw a letter from the governor on the internet regarding performance evaluation so all day she was getting texts asking if it was true or not. She said she had not received any formal communication so she assumed it was not true. She had not heard any direct communication then finally she got an email right before this meeting started that it was true. In the past she and James had direct communication from the governor’s office. She said she did not like for her staff to see things on the internet before she knows about it. Ms. Windle said it went out about noon. Mrs. Pack asked what it said. Ms. Windle said it stated that at this time there was not funding for raises. The Governor said he would revisit it later. She said once the new fiscal year opens and the change in the budget forecast it could be different. She said the Arkansas State Employees Association had the information very early and put it out ahead of the game. There was no conversation with the secretary or agency directors about it. Ms. Windle said there is a resource that she just thought of that you may be able to utilize and it is the Governor’s educational liaison, Dr. Allyson Roberts. She said they work very closely with Dr. Roberts. She said she thinks that anytime you want something elevated or shared to that level that she would be an excellent resource because she has a direct chain of command and ear to the governor’s office. Mr. DePriest asked her name and Ms. Windle said Dr. Allyson Roberts. Ms. Windle said once the pandemic is lifted Secretary Key will go back to his monthly meeting with all the agency directors. She said she thinks there has definitely been a breakdown in communication. She said you can’t blame everything on COVID. She said anything you do be open and transparent before it becomes an issue. She said she may not always have the answer but she can always try to find the answer. She said she could not imagine being in a school and being a state agency. Mrs. Pack said it is not easy being both. She said but at least before they could fight their own battles. She said one thing they are adamant about is the SCPI. Mr. DePriest said they believe communication is a basic human right. Mrs. Pack said they also had some questions about Special Education and think that the two superintendents should be included. Ms. Windle said she thinks they have a very good Special Education Department. She said any time that you want Matt Sewell or Alexis Tyler or any of those people to come over and address what needs to be addressed to the board or whatever they need to do to make sure you have the answers and support you need. Dr. Dickinson said she would love to be part of the team. She said it is not about asking them to come and solve our problems. It is more how we fit into what is there rather than having duplication of services.


Ms. Windle asked if she knew where they were located and Dr. Dickinson said yes she had been there. Mr. Caton said before something gets passed into a rule that someone would pause and think how it will impact the School for the Blind and the School for the Deaf because there is a unique situation from other public schools. He said he thinks that would help tremendously. Ms. Windle said she thought so too. Mr. DePriest said that is having a voice and part in the decision making process directly impact them. Ms. Windle said she agreed. Ms. McLaughlin said she would like to see the superintendents utilized in making some of these decisions that impact the schools. She said they both have very good expertise. Mrs. Pack said ASB's money for statewide services comes through you. Mr. DePriest said that is ESVI and is funded by federal grants. Mrs. Pack said but it comes through the state department. Mr. Caton said ASB does not get funding through... Mrs. Pack said what she was trying to say is money for services out in the state. Mr. Caton said it would just be the general revenue. Mrs. Pack said that is right and School for the Deaf goes to Children's Hospital. Mr. DePriest said how do we deal with this – how do we get money for the people that need outreach services. He said ASD they have the staff and knowledge and background to meet the needs of kids that are mainstreaming. At the Blind School it is the Birth to 3 Program. Is there a counter for it at ASD. Dr. Dickinson said they have statewide services and serve 0-12<sup>th</sup> grade. Mrs. Pack said they are also talking about services out in the public schools that they provide help/interpreters for. She said they do not get any of that money. She said the people have the expertise but don't have the money. How do we go about getting that money? Ms. Windle said she knew you have had conversations with Matt Sewell about some of this. Dr. Dickinson said she feels like there are a lot people with good intentions and they listen. She has explained about the needs of the kids that all over the state. She said the only support that they are getting now is speech and Otology services. She said they are the one place that can offer everything. She said they have people who have strong expertise in a variety of fields and can meet the needs of deaf kids around the state. She said she shares her speech and the people smile, shake her hand and the meeting is over. She has not seen any real change, comments or no one has contacted her saying they want to partner with her. She said she emails them back and nothing. Mr. DePriest said this is a great opportunity for ADE to be an advocate for deaf kids and producing a win for the deaf community and a greater return on investment. How do we get a voice and make some of this happen? Ms. Windle said you will have to refresh my memory – discretionary grants or what. Mrs. Pack said in the past it was a grant. It was federal money funneled through ADE to ASD. Ms. Windle asked how long ago that was. Whitney said it was in 2007. Dr. Dickinson said the grant is the history of the state of Arkansas. In many other states their schools for the deaf have their own line item that is passed by the legislature for statewide services and it is separate from the general revenue. She said that is another avenue to support deaf children statewide. Ms. Windle said that would take legislative action if you add a line item. Ms. Pack said they could work on repurposing the grant. Mr. DePriest asked how they do that.

Ms. Windle said she didn't know. She said she would have to see the terms of the grant. She said that would be something Matt Sewell would be more knowledgeable about. Mrs. Pack said there are people still at ASD that can do that (work on grant). Ms. Windle said that would be a win for the kids and that is the bottom line. Parents need options for their children and to be able to make informed decisions. Mr. DePriest said who could better serve those kids by rerouting this grant. He said it would be a win for the kids. Ms. Windle said she did not know if this grant was taken but build your case and make it as attractive and beneficial for the kids.

Mr. DePriest said that was all he had on his list and asked if anyone else had anything.

Ms. Windle said she was a teacher for years and loves kids. She said she loves to see them grow and develop. She said all kids should have that opportunity. Ms. Pack told her they appreciated her coming this evening. Mr. DePriest thanked her for her time.

There being no further business, Mr. DePriest adjourned the meeting at 7:15.

  
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Roy DePriest, Chair

  
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Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Secretary