

Arkansas School for the Deaf

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2021 REPORT to the PUBLIC

Dr. Janet Dickinson,
Superintendent



Field Trip to the Zoo

Report to the Public

I. Description:

Founded in 1850, Arkansas School for the Deaf (ASD) is not only one of the Arkansas' oldest schools, but it is the oldest school for the deaf west of the Mississippi River. ASD has a strong legacy as the only school for students who are deaf or hard of hearing in the state of Arkansas. In this role, ASD serves as the main resource for parents, school districts and agencies regarding the topic of Deaf Education and the Deaf community in Arkansas.

ASD provides individualized education to students from throughout Arkansas, many of whom live on campus during the week in dormitories. ASD serves infants through age 21 years. Students who have graduated from high school can enter a comprehensive post-secondary program focusing on career and college readiness. The school also provides support for deaf and hard of hearing students in mainstream programs throughout the state and serves families of deaf children from birth until school age and also as a Part C Early Intervention provider.

ASD has a rich heritage of working together to create learning opportunities for academic excellence and personal independence. The staff of ASD supports this mission by providing students with dynamic opportunities for learning and delivering more equitable access to the world around them, truly instilling independence, autonomy, and confidence in all of our students. ASD is proud to be a leader in the field of deaf education nationwide.

Although ASD is a state agency, the school follows the same state mandates as public schools. As of July 1, 2019, ASD is considered a division under the hierarchy of the Arkansas Department of Education.

Characteristics of the Students Served by Arkansas School for the Deaf

Currently, our student population at the Little Rock campus ranges in age from 2 years to 21 years. Student placement and individualized programs at ASD is based fully on their assessed needs and their Individual Education Plan (IEP). It is designed to meet Federal and State mandates for a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for deaf and hard of hearing students in the state of Arkansas.

Statewide Services currently serves infants and their families around the state. Young deaf children 0-5 years old may be served in their family home, their daycare, or in another setting chosen by their family.

The primary focus of Arkansas School for the Deaf is to provide an excellent education to every student enrolled in our program.

Unique Community Characteristics that Impact the School:

The student body at Arkansas School for the Deaf is diverse in many ways. We serve students from every corner of the state. This geographical range spans the Ozark Mountains to the Little Rock inner city population, as well as the southern and Delta farming communities. Students stay in the dormitories from Sunday evening through Friday early afternoon. While most students communicate through American Sign Language, a growing percentage of students also use spoken English to communicate.

Leadership In Collaborative Partnerships

Arkansas School for the Deaf believes that by working together with national and local partners, we can greatly enhance the education, experiences, and lives of deaf children. Today, ASD's leadership is engaged in promoting strategic and valuable partnerships with many local agencies and corporations to meet the diverse needs of our student body. Collaborative initiatives include:

National Level

- *Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools & Programs for the Deaf (CEASD):* Arkansas School for the Deaf is a member of CEASD. This organization brings together a rich composite of resources and reaches out to both enhance education programs and influence educational policy.
- *The National Association for the Deaf (NAD):* Arkansas School for the Deaf maintains open communication with the NAD, which is the nation's premier civil rights organization of, by and for deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the United States of America.
- *American Society for Deaf Children (ASDC):* Arkansas School for the Deaf is a member of ASDC, a parent helping parent network that provides a tremendous support to families through conferences, support systems, and research based information sharing. Our parents receive a free membership to ASDC, and the school is actively promoting the involvement of parents in this organization.
- *Hands & Voices:* Arkansas School for the Deaf is a member of *Hands & Voices*, a parent driven, non-profit organization dedicated to providing support to families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing. ASD's Director of Statewide Services, Karen Lange, was recently chosen as the honoree at the H&V gala.

State Level

- *Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative:* Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative operates within a network of 15 sister service agencies created to help schools meet accreditation standards, equalize educational opportunities, use resources effectively, and promote coordination of Arkansas Department of Education initiatives. ARESC is governed by a board of directors consisting of the Superintendent from each member school. ASD's Superintendent is a member of their Board. ASD's staff takes full advantage of the quality services and trainings offered by ARESC.
- *Public Schools and Arkansas Department of Education (ADE),* Arkansas School for the Deaf is an active resource in areas relating to deaf education. Public schools in Arkansas and the ADE reach out frequently to access information on deaf education and the deaf community at large.

Local Level

- *Metropolitan Career Technical School:* In a special agreement with Metro, our students are able to take vocational classes and earn certifications in vocational fields.
- *Assistive Technology:* Arkansas School for the Deaf offers as an assistive technology resource with local school districts, where participants can learn about tools and strategies to support students, including a wide range of assistive listening devices.
- *Youth Homes, Inc.: Mental Health Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing:* By partnering with these mental health experts, Arkansas School for the Deaf is better able to meet the needs of deaf students with emotional needs. We have a wonderful licensed counselor stationed on our campus. We are working together with Youth Homes, Inc. to create a group home for needy deaf children to open Fall 2019.
- *ASL Academy:* Arkansas School for the Deaf has an ASL Academy that offers ASL classes for the community on our campus, as well as ASL workshops out in the community for businesses, police departments, fire stations, and other community groups.
- *Little Rock Police:* Arkansas School for the Deaf maintains a strong relationship with the Little Rock Police. Not only have our facilities been used by the local police and SWAT Team for practice outside of school hours, but they also work closely with Arkansas School for the Deaf in training the staff and students in safety issues.
- *Many More Relationships...:* We have a growing number of organizations, schools, corporations, foundations, and professionals who are becoming more and more engaged with our school. We actively seek out opportunities to engage new “friends” and promote these relationships.

Parents– Relationships and Involvement

At Arkansas School for the Deaf, we value parents and their dual role as part of the community, and part of our team. We work to support and engage parents in the school. Some of our most important initiatives include:

- *American Sign Language Classes:* Free ASL classes are offered to all families of students enrolled at Arkansas School for the Deaf. If class times are not convenient for families, then families are offered individual tutoring sessions.
- *Very Important Parent (VIP) Meetings:* Traditionally, on the first Thursday of each month, parents are invited to meet with the Superintendent. This meeting often focuses on planning for upcoming family events. But also, it is an important time to gain the parents feedback on the school, and any perceived concerns they might have. Since the pandemic began, we have explored many options in reaching out to parents. We have offered Zoom ASL classes and IEP meetings. We have created the “Make a Difference” initiative, which gives parents a pathway for sharing good ideas and concerns with us.
- *Statewide Services:* Arkansas School for the Deaf provides family support services for our youngest deaf children and their families. As one might imagine, we become quite close to these families, and in doing so, we become a resource to them as their children grow.

Internal Forces

The major internal forces that impact the school include:

Students' Needs: Arkansas School for the Deaf serves a diverse population of students. Students have varying degrees of hearing loss, cognitive, academic and communication, social and behavioral skills and abilities. The needs of the student impact the instruction, the educational program, the development and implementation of curriculum and socialization within the ASD environment.

Board of Trustee:

Our Board meets monthly, and we are fortunate to have a team of dynamic, professional, and engaged Trustees. Their high expectations and guidance help to move ASD toward greater growth, effective practices and prosperity.

Policies and Regulations as a State Agency:

As a state agency, we currently have many policies and restrictions that set us apart from other schools. For example, currently there is a state mandated cap on employees. Therefore, we have no ability to hire staff to accommodate a growing student body or significant changes in student needs. Recently, the state announced a moratorium on hiring any positions that report directly to the agency director.

Budget Considerations as a State Agency:

Arkansas School for the Deaf is a state agency with a fixed allocation per year. Funding is not connected to enrollment, and therefore, the budget becomes tighter and tighter the larger we grow. The potential to undertake new initiatives and provide services that our students need, is directly impacted by the school's ability to fund such endeavors.

External Forces

The major external forces that impact the school include:

School Districts: The student's local school districts have a certain amount of decision-making power in whether or not their students enroll in our program. Upon enrolling at ASD, the school districts are invited to IEP meetings and encouraged to be a valued part of the team.

Parent Expectations: Parents have expectations and desires for their children, which impact the programs offered at ASD. Parents are formally and informally asked to give input into the direction and plans of ASD.

Deaf Community: Many deaf adults throughout the state are alumni of ASD. They grew up in the dormitories, and therefore, feel that ASD is "home". ASD collaborates closely with many deaf community organizations, such as:

- Arkansas Association of the Deaf
- Little Rock Association of the Deaf
- Arkansas DeafBlind Community
- Arkansas Registry of Interpreters
- And...many deaf churches throughout the state



SCHOOL WIDE DECISION-MAKING STAFF OPPORTUNITIES

At Arkansas School for the Deaf, shared decision making is a collaborative process designed to improve the learning environment and impact student achievement. Overall, collaboration and teamwork is valued at ASD. We feel that multiple perspectives lead to richer decision-making and more effective practices.

Shared decision making occurs in the following ways:

Administrative (“A”) Team: This team includes the supervisors of all departments. This team meets with the Superintendent to report departmental news, collaborate on new initiatives, and to discuss best practices in leadership. This team meets every Thursday.

Educational Leadership Team: This team of administrators and lead teachers plans professional development, educational initiatives, and the ordering of learning resources. They also lead the curriculum development process. This team also discusses the detailed implementation plans of school improvement plans, and looks closely at teaching and learning at ASD. This team meets every Wednesday.

Mental Health Team:

Our mental health team is comprised of members who focus on positive behavior interventions and support for our students, as well as monitor the interventions of student with mental health needs. This team reviews any red flag students and discuss current initiatives. This team meets every Thursday.

Safety Committee:

The ASD Safety Committee is comprised of staff members who help to maintain all aspects of health and safety on campus. Their focus on safety has had a positive impact on our school. Through their leadership, we now have many safety measures in place, including a visual alert system, fewer entrances, internal cameras and external cameras. This team meets every other Tuesday.

PR & Media Team:

This team focuses on the public relations and media needs of the school. Topics for discussion include the website design, flyers for upcoming events, distribution of flyers, program brochures, and the semi-annual newsletter. It includes the Director of Technology, School designated Photographer, Media Specialist, Director of Communications and Superintendent. This team meets every Friday.

Technology Team:

This team focuses on the technology and 1:1 Laptop rollout throughout the school. Topics for discussion include 1:1 laptop rollout, internet issues, smartboards needing repair, etc. This team includes the Director of Technology, Principals, Media Specialist, Librarian, Director of Communications and Superintendent.

All programs share the following Educational Support Staff:

1 Audiologist	1 Librarian
4 Speech Language Pathologists	2 LPNs
2 ASD Teachers	1 Occupational Therapist
1 Counselor	1 Physical Therapist
1 Guidance Counselor	1 School Psychologist
1 Dean of Students	1 Physical Education Teacher
1 Job Coach	1 Art Teacher
2 Registered Nurses	1 Music Teacher

II. Purpose:

MOTTO

Dream It! Believe It! Achieve It!

MISSION

The mission of Arkansas School for the Deaf is to empower Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing students to become highly effective communicators who are educated, motivated and independent. At ASD, students are transformed into confident young people inspired to achieve their goals with the skills to succeed in a competitive world.

VISION

Arkansas School for the Deaf is an inspired community committed to achievement, innovation, collaboration, and excellence.

Achievement

At ASD, students belong, excel and thrive. ASD prepares students from birth to age 21 to be college and career ready by ensuring students achieve the essential skills of a rigorous curriculum in a bilingual environment where ASL and English are equally valued.

Innovation

ASD implements bold and creative strategies, connecting ideas and technologies to meet the changing needs of our students, maximize their success, and enhance ASD's reputation as the Arkansas resource center on deafness, and a premier leader in bilingual education.

Collaboration

ASD nurtures interactions within our community, as well as creating partnerships locally and globally, to bring new opportunities to our students and to strengthen the future of ASD.

Excellence

ASD recognizes excellence as equipping a diverse community of promising young people to go out in the world with the confidence to lead lives of integrity, purpose and achievement in an increasingly global society.

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT DEAF CHILDREN



Bilingual Belief Statements

Arkansas School for the Deaf is an accessible ASL/English bilingual community in which people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and hearing learn and work together without language and communication barriers. At Arkansas School for the Deaf, we have the following beliefs:

We recognize that students coming to Arkansas School for the Deaf have diverse cultures, backgrounds, and language abilities.

For some students, American Sign Language is their first language.

For some students, Spoken English is their first language.

For some students, another cultural signed or spoken language is their first language.

Some students come to ASD with no language.

We believe that American Sign Language and English are equal and separate languages. Both languages allow Deaf children the ability to access academic information, interact effectively with others, and express themselves creatively.

We believe that every student has a right to a language rich learning environment, where he/she has full access to clear communication and language.

We believe students need to learn how to interact successfully in both Deaf culture and hearing culture. Culture and identity development are important for every child to develop self-worth and self-confidence.

We believe Deaf students need real life exposure to experiences in order to increase their understanding of and ability to successfully interact in the hearing community.

We believe Deaf students need Deaf role models and experience in the Deaf community to increase their understanding and ability to successfully interact in the Deaf community.

We recognize and respect each student's individual needs and abilities. We believe that everyone is equal and important, regardless of hearing levels, their preferred communication mode, and their cultural identity

We believe that in order to optimize student achievement, Deaf children must have early exposure to a rich and comprehensive language. Therefore, it is our priority to:

- Meet these needs on our campus by providing programs, resources, and support to families of young Deaf children to foster their exposure to a full language.
- Meet these needs through a responsive and supported Statewide Services program.

2. Research shows that there are significant advantages to being bilingual, and we believe that Deaf children have a right to be bilingual.

- Students should have access to meaningful instruction in both ASL and English (written & spoken).
- Both languages should be equally celebrated and students should be equally proud of their achievements in both languages.
- Gaining fluency in ASL has a positive impact on the language and conceptual development of all students. Students should have access to quality curriculum and instruction in the linguistic structure of ASL, designed to increase both incidental and academic ASL. Students should also have quality assessments to monitor their progress in acquiring language.
- Students with the ability to communicate through spoken English should receive quality instruction to increase their skills in both incidental and academic spoken English, as well as quality assessments to monitor their progress. Lip reading can also serve as an additional tool to increase the child's communication opportunities.
- To the greatest extent possible, students from other cultural families, such as Spanish speaking families, should receive support for learning their family's heritage language.
- Technological devices (hearing aids, cochlear implants, etc.) serve as tools to help students achieve more success in gaining listening and spoken English skills. We believe it is important to provide our students up-to-date information and support in accessing and maximizing the success of these tools. We respect students' and families' decisions to choose either to use or not to use technological devices.
- We believe Deaf students need strong English skills to function independently in a hearing world, and to maximize their future success. Mastery of written English includes both being able to read and comprehend complex texts, and being able to express oneself through written English.

We believe that Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children benefit from interaction with Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing peers and role models. Access to Deaf role models enhances their understanding of the language, culture, and gives them a view of what success looks like as a Deaf adult.

We believe that to successfully meet the diverse needs of future generations of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, the following are essential:

- Comprehensive state-of-the-art classrooms, instructional strategies, and resources to maximize each student's learning of ASL
- Comprehensive state-of-the-art classrooms, instructional strategies, and resources to maximize each student's learning of English.

We, the staff and faculty of ASD, believe that to foster double pride in our students, we must first have double pride ourselves. We realize that it is essential that we have fluent skills in both our native and non-native languages in order to provide a high quality bilingual instructional environment.

CORE ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

STAFF:

Communication

- We believe good communication is multi-faceted and respectful.
- We establish clear communication channels so information is heard first hand, not through the “grapevine”.
- We work constantly to keep each other informed and connected.

Collaboration

- We work together as a team toward a common goal by utilizing each other’s expertise and talents.
- We are team players and know how to compromise. We don’t have a “my way or the highway” approach.
- We believe understanding multiple perspectives leads to better decision-making.

Respect

- We value different cultures, languages, and opinions. We continue to learn from each other.
- We treat each other professionally and with kindness, even when we don’t agree.
- We value each person regardless of their job title.

Open Minded

- We are receptive to new and different ideas, including those that necessitate leaving our comfort zone.
- We believe that by embracing change, rather than avoiding it, we have an opportunity to significantly improve our future.

Professional

- We maintain a positive image and attitude, acting in a professional & dignified manner – regardless of whether we are happy or we are not happy.
- We use good judgment and do what is right for each other and our students.
- We keep abreast of significant changes within our fields, and continually strive for excellence in all we do.

Support

- We focus on the good in ASD, our students and our colleagues.
- We are supportive and nurturing of each other. We support each other by being there to help, having each other’s back.
- We promote upbeat and positive thoughts for the future, and support each by believing in each other.

STUDENTS:

R - Responsibility

O - Organization

A - Achieving

R - Respect

III. Notable Achievements



Arkansas School for the Deaf has been in a stage of change as we have strived to raise the bar in nearly every area. We have learned that change is hard, then messy, then beautiful. We remind each other of this process, as we take on challenges to improve our programs for students.

DEVELOPMENT

Grants

Since October 2020, we have also closed out seven active grants. ASD has also received the following grants totaling \$111,828.29:

Grant	Description of Request	Awarded
CASE Plant Science Startup Grant	Supplies and equipment for Plant Science courses	\$41,954.47
Perkins 1% Grant	Drivers' Ed, Software, Professional Development	\$24,968.36
National School Lunch Program Equipment Grant	New dishwasher for Breeding Cafeteria	\$11,344.96
GENYOUth Emergency School Delivery Funding	Support for food services	\$2,000
Career Coach Program Grant	Hiring a career coach for the ADCC	\$31,560.50

PR/Media

- The PR/Media Team meet regularly to strategically plan messaging across all ASD's communication platforms, including social media, website, School Messenger, email newsletters, and Carousel.
- The Leopard News was updated with a new design and more information.
- ASD's social media outlets had increased engagement with 3-6 posts per week on Facebook and Instagram. The Leopard News is now posted on Facebook for community consumption. The ASD Facebook page now has 3.5 thousand followers, and the Instagram page has 919.

Parnell Hall Ribbon Cutting

- In May, the Development Department helped plan and host the ribbon cutting program for Parnell Hall.
- Several dignitaries from the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resource Council – the granting agency that funded much of the restoration work in the building – attended the event and were recognized for their generous support.

Silent Sunday 2020

Since the pandemic prevented ASD from hosting the annual Silent Sunday event, the ASD Development Department staff created the "Tasty Tuesdays" and "Thankful Thursdays" initiatives. They were developed to help support the organizations that supported ASD in the past.

- Each Tasty Tuesday, we highlighted restaurant partners and urged our followers to support them by purchasing a meal.
- Every Thankful Thursday, we spotlighted some of our generous sponsors and asked our followers to support them as well.

These initiatives drove increased engagement on our social media platforms, with several restaurants and sponsors also engaging with our posts.

FACILITIES

The ASD Facilities Department is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of all ASD buildings, facilities, and grounds; and the oversight and management of construction projects on campus. The facilities department has certainly been busy this past year maintaining the grounds, HVAC equipment, and building interiors. The department has committed to providing five star service to its internal customers: the students, faculty, staff; and visitors who are users and occupants of the school's buildings, and property.

- **Parnell Hall:** Phase three improvements to ASD's historic Parnell Hall were carried out by Wagner Construction, and were completed in June of this year. ASD's facilities manager regularly reviewed and surveyed work done by the aforementioned general contractor, and their subcontractors to ensure compliance with construction documents; adherence to industry standards and best practices and customer expectations.
- **In-House Work:** To save the school money, more, and more work has been done by the department's own forces. Many AC units have been serviced and repaired by team members with HVAC experience and skill sets. Other examples of cost savings include the removal and replacement of thirteen water fountains with bottle fill stations; and the repair and testing of back flow assemblies.
- **Aesthetic Improvements:** In an effort to improve the aesthetics of the campus, single hammered hardwood mulch was added to the roundabout beds and the beds at the Sturgis administration building. Also, the campus street/parking signs have been removed and replaced.
- **New Equipment:** In the months of May and June the department added two new Kabota diesel mowers to its fleet of cutting equipment; a mower with a 72 inch deck, and a mower with a 60 inch deck. During that same period, the department also built up an inventory of HVAC repair equipment, and parts/supplies.
- **Shared Services:** One of this past year's more noteworthy endeavors, has been the merger of the ASD maintenance department with the ASBVI, (Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired), maintenance department as part of the movement to a shared services model. This process began in earnest the end of July and first of August. To date, the sharing of services is proving to be very successful, and mutually beneficial for both campuses.

AUDIOLOGY/SPEECH PATHOLOGY

- The year started with figuring out a way to provide virtual speech therapy that was HIPAA compliant and user friendly. After researching several options we chose the E-therapy platform called STAR. This provided a way for the speech therapists, the occupational therapist and the physical therapist to participate in therapy as well as keep notes and attendance.
- The audiology department made a big change when the audiologist of 20+ years retired and Dr. Mary Martha Henry moved into this position. There were files and documents that needed updating and cleaning out. This proved to be a bigger job than it seemed at first glance.

- In October the speech pathology team added a new member, Lenae Haley. Lenae had completed an internship at ASD the previous year and jumped right in. She began seeing students and taking ASL classes.
- The speech pathology team kept motivation levels up by giving monthly awards for “best effort in speech”. Many times this was a special lunch provided by the speech pathology team.
- As Christmas approached our team headed up the “Angel Tree” gift giving program. We were able to provide a variety of gifts to the students in lower school. These gifts ranged from gift cards, to clothes, to books to toys.
- As the new year rolled around the speech pathologists actively participated in parent teacher conferences.
- The third nine weeks can prove challenging to keep the student’s attention. With that in mind the speech pathologists began a curriculum called Movie Time. In this curriculum the student and the therapists watch clips of a film and discuss the social and pragmatic nature of the scene.
- Pragmatic issues were also addressed using social media sites and situations. For example, a “post” can cause many different feelings and it is important to be mindful of the reactions.
- The audiologist ordered six new hearing aids for the hearing aid loaner bank.
- The audiologist and speech pathologist developed a relationship with the speech pathology team at AR Children’s Hospital and set up a quarterly meeting to staff certain students.
- The audiologist assisted a graduate student in a research project that involved language and social skills of teenage students who are Deaf and hard of hearing.
- The speech pathologists researched the latest technology on lip reading skills and lip formation for speech reading. The school ordered iPads for the team to be able to utilize apps in this field as well as others.
- Members of the team attended the ADE summit and the audiologist along with one of the speech pathologist presented on collaboration with deaf educators on ensuring success of the Deaf/HH student.

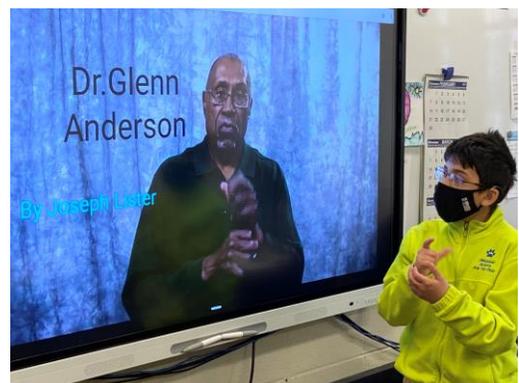
CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND INNOVATION

The Curriculum, Instruction and Innovation (CII) Department is led by Donna VanDevender. Donna comes to this position as a Nationally Board Certified teacher and has been our well-loved high school science teacher for many years.

The CII department oversees curriculum, professional development, instructional coaching, registration & new admissions, libraries, ASL programs, and new educational programs and text resources.

Registration:

- After launching our new online enrollment platform, our CII team expertly worked through some glitches to successfully ensure all families had finalized online registration before August 15.
- ASD held a successful drive-thru registration with pitt stops for families to check in with nurses, technology, transportation, and cafeteria staff. Families who had not yet been able to register online were diverted to the tornado shelter for health screening and assistance with the enrollment process.



Professional Development:

The CII Department provided professional development opportunities to teachers during the week before school starting. Included in the opportunities was a full day training for science teachers in using the Discovery Techbook online science text resource.

New Admissions:

The CII Department is thrilled to welcome 9 new students to ASD, with 10 more in process of enrolling. New student admissions is a complicated process, but CII Department tries to support parents as much as possible to welcome them to campus.

New Library Programming:

The new librarian, Regina Dettra, has started the school year off with a whirl of activity. She has kicked off a reading incentive program in each school with age-appropriate reward activities. She has initiated a schedule where she has library programming in each school. Teachers have reported a dramatic increase in students' reading interest already.

New Educational Programs and Text Resources:

- Schoology is a new LMS (Learning Management System) which allows teachers to assign educational work to students. Schoology links with eSchool, so CII and IT have worked hard with the schools to get up and running. Several teachers have reported astonishment at the amazing features in the program.
- Discovery Techbook is a K-12 Science text resource. Teachers have reported tons of positive feedback about this engaging resource.
- Foundations for Literacy is a K-2 targeted literacy support resource specifically for Deaf and Hard of Hearing learners. The boxes just arrived last week and teachers are excited to get started.
- Bilingual Grammar Curriculum is another resource specifically for Deaf and Hard of Hearing learners. Teachers are thrilled to have more resources which have been created for the needs of our students.

STUDENT AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

The new Student and Family Support Services Department was created in 2020 and is led by Eddie Schmeckenbecher. It includes the mental health team, interpreting services, ASL classes for families and staff, and the physical therapy and occupational therapy services.

- Students from Arkansas school for the Deaf spoke at the Arkansas governor's daily press conference. These kids were the only kids that have spoken at any of the press conference since the pandemic began.
- OT and PT were able to purchase new equipment for therapy. Also, new shelves were installed in the therapy room. Throughout the year, more equipment has been purchased for this team.
- Community Sign Language classes on campus. ASL 1, 2, and 3 have continued to thrive. We are now offering an online option for classes. We offer classes year-round.



- We continue to contract with Behavioral Health for mental health services. Madison Scott is our new contract Mental Health Therapist.
- We were very excited to welcome Anna Snare, a new counselor to our team. Anna recently graduated with a master's degree in counseling. Anna is also Deaf and has made great connections with our students.
- We were also very excited to welcome Jaime Condon, our new School Social Worker to our team. Jaime graduated with a master's degree from Gallaudet University. Jaime is hearing but her parents are Deaf (she is a CODA), so she is able to fluently communicate with our students.
- Dr Epperson, our psychiatrist, began a schedule of coming to campus once a week to work with our students. She is the only ASL fluent psychiatrist that we know of in the nation.

STATEWIDE SERVICES

Overview

In January of 2021, after spending almost 28 years in the classroom, Dr. Gretchen Cobb became the new Director of Statewide Services.

She and a team of early interventionists, instructional and service coordinators provide developmental assessment and therapy to the families of infants from birth to 3 years old.

After age three, the team provides transition support to preschool programs and then, into kindergarten.

As part of the team expanding vision, Statewide Services started providing services to school-age students by attending IEP meetings, collaborating with school districts across the state, consulting with teachers on best-practices for teaching Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, checking accommodations, preparing for post-high school career and college readiness, and advocating for students and parents.

Finally, in the summer of 2021, the team created a new research area. This area operates in a lab-style to collaborate with, train, and support teachers, parents, students, and others in gathering, analyzing, and writing about research. Additionally, the team hosts meetings using technology, attends webinars and other virtual meetings, conducts research interviews, and, of course, has potluck lunches in the Research Lab. They are developing a library with hard-copy materials and database access and plan to begin coordinated research projects on the ASD campus in the spring of 2022. Current areas of interest include curriculum development, strategies to overcome language deprivation, ASL studies, social emotional learning, and other educational and sociolinguistics topics.

Certifications Earned

On May 19, 2021, Millicent Callan, Family Services Assistant, received her provisional certification as a Service Coordinator through the Arkansas Department of Human Services. She has worked diligently over a four-month period to finish the program and receive this certification approximately a year ahead of time. As a Service Coordinator for ASD, Millicent will conduct intake interviews, develop IFSPs, and coordinate transition services for every Deaf and Hard of Hearing newborn through 3-year-old in the state.

On June 30, 2021, Dr. Gretchen Cobb, Director of Statewide Services, finished certification for Developmental Therapist the Arkansas Department of Human Services.

On September 2, 2021, Angela Jones, Linda Hoover, and Dr. Gretchen Cobb all received Medicaid Provider numbers and are now able to bill for services. Additionally, the department will be able to back bill for the last calendar year, starting from September 2020.

Committees And Statewide Network

Deafblind Literacy and Communication Team—the group includes professionals from ADE, SWS, ACH, CAYSI, UAMS, University of Arkansas, Henderson University, Easter Seals, and other school districts from across the state is beginning a discussion of the book *Comprehensive Literacy for All: Teaching Students with Significant Disabilities to Read and Write* by Karen A. Erickson and David A. Koppenhaver. One goal the group has is to inform the Science of Reading committee about the aspects of teaching students who have vision and hearing concerns.

CIRCLES—Statewide Services is collaborating with ADCC, ADE, AR Transition Services, AR Rehabilitation Services, and the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition to facilitate inter-agency collaboration for youth with disabilities.

Universal Newborn Hearing Screening, Tracking and Intervention Advisory Board Meeting—SWS provides updates on the current 0-3 programming and the vision for expansion, including the 3-5 and K-12 along with the development of the research center.

Hands and Voices of Arkansas—collaborative meeting to discuss upcoming activities that ASD and Hands and Voice can participate in together. Two main collaborations for the upcoming year are the Hands and Voices Zoo Day activity and ASD's Carnival and Silent Sunday.

Infant Hearing Program: The Infant Hearing Program provides information about state and national support organizations, service clubs, and financial assistance options for families with infants or toddlers who have been diagnosed with hearing loss. Along with detailed information about terminology, communication choices, how to deal with emotions connect to Deaf and Hard of Hearing infants. Statewide Services has worked closely with the Infant Hearing Program team in creating materials to disseminate to parents of newly identified infants.

Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC): The LICC is a multi-county coalition of individuals, programs, and organizations committed to improving results for children 0-5 with developmental delay and/or disability and their families.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Early Intervention Leadership Professional Learning Community

Medicaid and Frist Connection trainings

Other Activities

Beyond providing developmental therapy and support services to children across the state, the Statewide Services Department also facilitates ASL classes in a variety of ways:

- ASL Connect—an ASL education program from Gallaudet met with Statewide Services and Student, and Family Support Services to create a pilot program for 10 families in Arkansas.
- ASD ASL Classes—working with Eddie Schmeckenbecher, the Director of Student & Family Support Services, the SWS team handles registration and conducting the online facilitation of the campus classes.

As the District Testing Coordinator, Dr. Cobb oversees the training, implementation, and security of all state testing materials, which includes ACT and ACT Aspire among others.



What Makes Us Unique:

Facts to Know:

- We are a Residential School
- 97% of our students have an IEP
- Many students enroll at ASD with little or no language
- Students receive education in their native language
 - direct communication in ASL and/or Sign Language
- Understanding of how Deaf students learn
 - Eye contact
 - Visual learning
 - Language differences
- Additional Services include
 - ECE-Early Childhood Education
 - ADCC- Arkansas Deaf Career Center
 - Statewide Services Outreach
- Services Communicating Directly with Students
 - Mental Health
 - Audiologists
 - Speech Language Pathologists
 - Physical & Occupational Therapists
 - Health Services including access to physician and dentist



Our Curriculum:

To meet Arkansas State Standards, Arkansas School for the Deaf currently implements the following curricula:

Mathematics

- Envision Math, Arkansas state standards

English Language Arts

- Step Up To writing K-12
- Reading A-Z curriculum and materials for K-5, supplemental materials for 6-12
Science A-Z
Vocabulary A-Z
- Elementary- balanced literacy
Guided reading, shared reading, independent reading, phonological awareness (auditory and visual), fluency, comprehension, word study, reading and writing workshop centers
Scholastic book sets/storia books
- Middle School Literacy - Daily-5 center
CAFE Comprehension, Accuracy, Fluency and Expand Vocabulary
Literature circles
- HS Edge (literacy curriculum)
- HS Writing lab, student blogs

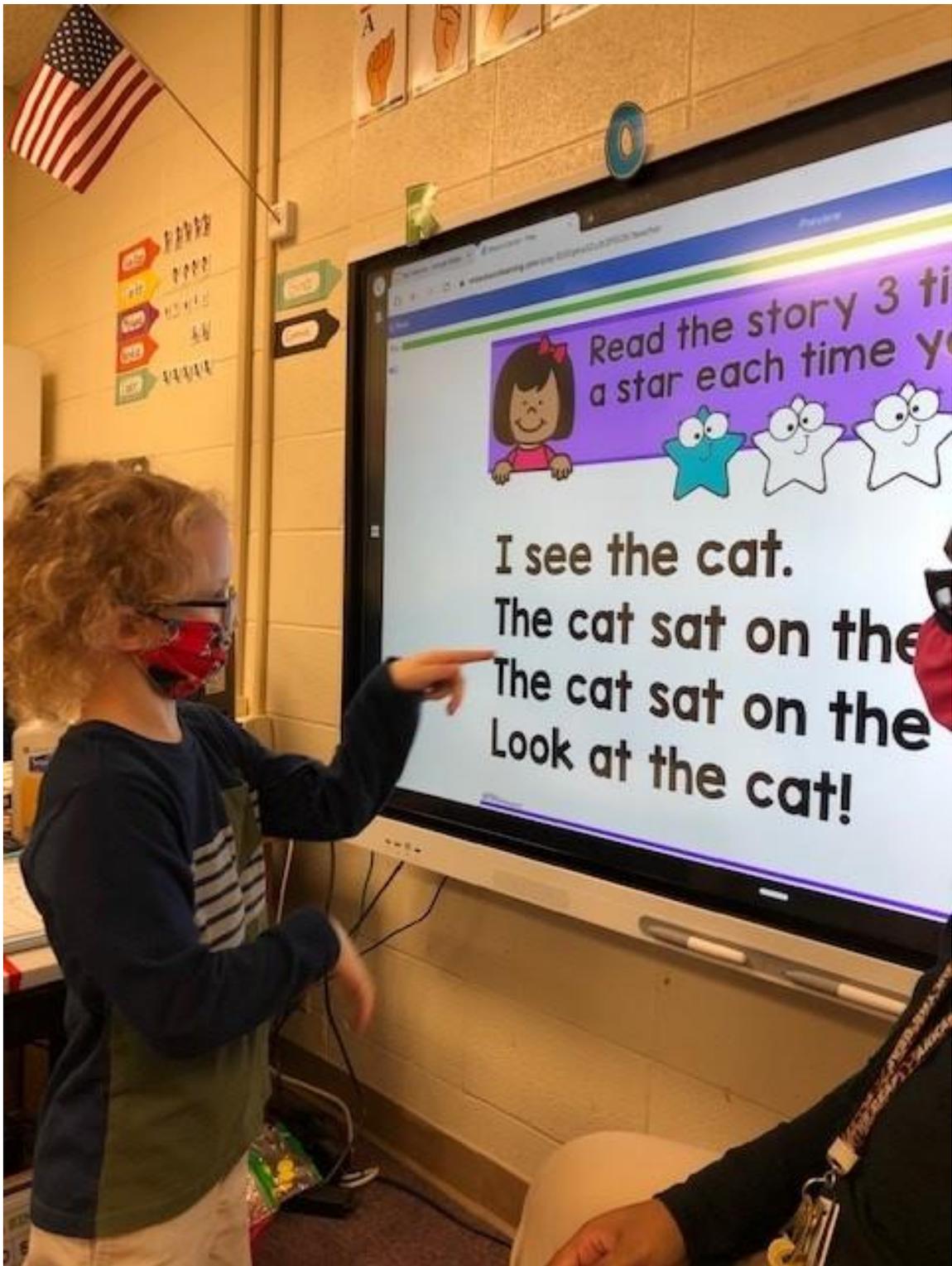
Social Studies

- Arkansas Council for the Social Studies pacing guide
- MS/HS AR standards, teachers are currently researching new curriculum in the PLC collaborative teams with Solution Tree.

Science

- K-12 Discovery TechBook curriculum aligned with Arkansas Science standards





Progress Monitoring:

At ASD, we monitor the progress of our students. We also give students opportunities to track their own progress. Progress monitoring efforts include:

Elementary and Middle School

- STAR math, STAR reading, Developmental Reading Assessment
- Reading A-Z benchmarks, running records
- SUTW assessments with rubric
- Group 2 and MS
 - Accelerated Reading and Math
 - Celebrations and rewards for progress and growth

High School

- Star Math and Star Reading Assessments
- MAP testing
- IXL assessment

Current School Initiatives:

Professional Learning Communities

- Curriculum alignment & development
- Skills Checklists

Initiatives Implemented during 2021-2022 School Year

- Schoology: A new LMS (Learning Management System) which allows teachers to assign educational work to students. Schoology links with eSchool, so CII and IT have worked hard with the schools to get up and running. Several teachers have reported astonishment at the amazing features in the program.
- Discovery Techbook: K-12 Science text resource. Teachers have reported tons of positive feedback about this engaging resource.
- Foundations for Literacy: K-2 targeted literacy support resource specifically for Deaf and Hard of Hearing learners.
- Bilingual Grammar Curriculum Resource specifically for Deaf and Hard of Hearing learners. Teachers are thrilled to have this training and resource which have been created for the needs of our students.

Targeted Training: Schoology training provided for all educational staff.

Pursuant to Act 35 of 2003

Pursuant to Act 35 of 2003, the Arkansas School for the Deaf (ASD) is releasing the following information regarding ASD programs, services, and student achievement for the 2018-2019 school year. Given small class size and grade-level enrollment figures, release of student test data is restricted due to concern that individual students could be identified. Therefore, the statistical results given should be interpreted with caution and with consideration of this and other special factors in mind.

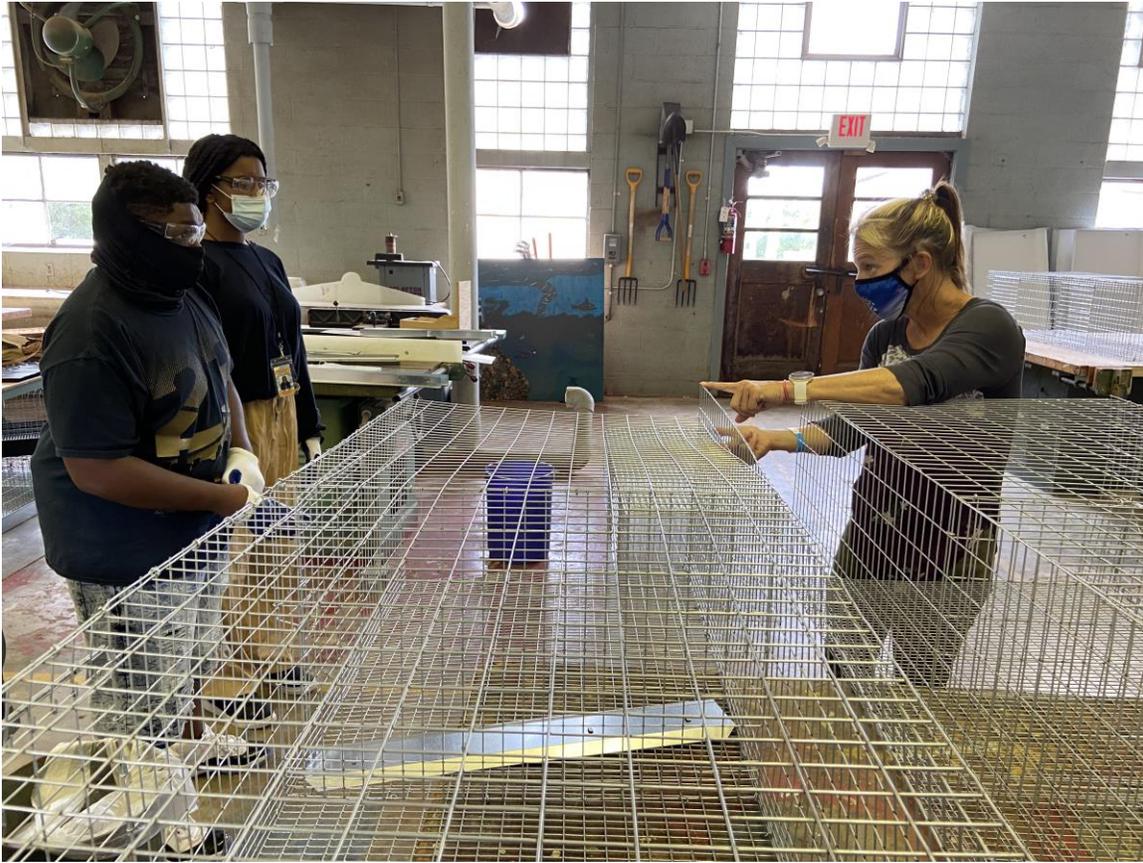
During the 2019-2020 school year, our Arkansas School for the Deaf students participated in the ACT Aspire testing at grades 3-10. Aspire tests students in 5 areas: English, Reading, Writing, Science, and Math. The scores are given in levels aligned to ACT Readiness and are as follows: Exceeding, Ready, Close, and In Need of Support. Students who test in the 9th and 10th grade are also given a predicted ACT score.

No students at the Arkansas School for the Deaf are enrolled in advanced placement courses. Therefore, no advanced placement examinations were taken by students this year.

6 students completed their educational programs during the 2020-2021 school year. 33% of these graduates completed their IEP diploma, and 66% of these students received their general education diplomas. After graduation, 50% of these students returned for post-secondary education with Arkansas Deaf Career Center. In addition, 33% of these students accepted full time jobs.

Achievement is vitally important to the faculty and staff of ASD, and while there is continued effort to improve state-mandated assessment results, outcome data must be scrutinized in light of their applicability to our student population. The data obtained does not adequately represent the achievement or abilities of our students and shows less performance growth because it compares Deaf or Hard of Hearing students to their English speaking, hearing peers. The assessments required are not validated or normed on students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Additionally, these English-based state assessments prove to be a challenge to not only ASD students but to Deaf or Hard of Hearing students across the nation.





All Cooped Up!

With the aid of a grant from Arkansas CTE, students are working hard putting together cages to hold both chickens and rabbits. Soon, they will be actively engaged in learning about small animal husbandry. "The students are excited about the possibility of having a small animal farm here on campus." stated teacher Dana Lindner.