

OFFICIAL MINUTES FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING OF THE
ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

The Board of Trustees for the Arkansas School for the Deaf met for their monthly meeting on July 19, 2016.

Present: Mary Weeks, Chairperson; Dr. Doug Watson, Vice Chairperson; Faith McLaughlin, Secretary; Susan Pack, Board Member; Jeanne Tribett, ASB Parent Representative; Harry Pompeo, ASD Parent Representative; James Caton, ASBVI Superintendent; Dr. Janet Dickinson, ASD Superintendent; , Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community, Hillcrest residents

16-D-012 Motion to Approve Consent Items

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

Action Items

Approval of Student Handbook

Dr. Dickinson said last year in July was her first board meeting. She said her first or second week on the job she had to develop a handbook and she remembered coming to the board meeting and being so nervous. She said Jim Hill pulls out this beautiful handbook and hands it out and she said she was embarrassed because ASD's was just printed and copied. She said this year we have a handbook. She said she had the Student Handbook and the Employee Handbook. She said the Student Handbook needs to be approved. She said she was going to hand it out and asked Ray and Rick to give a quick condensed explanation of anything new in the handbook. Mr. Porter said in the Standards Review they didn't have a definition of a full day in the Student Handbook so it was added. Mr. Bolen said they had an attendance policy that was included in there. He said they have lowered the days to meet standards with public schools. He said the old policy was much higher but now it is 20 and 20. The high school attendance is more important because they are earning credits and with too many misses they will lose high school credits and would have to repeat those classes. He said the other is a grading policy. He said they changed that to a 7 point system from a 10 point system. He said that was standard across schools. He said most colleges follow a GPA system. Dr. Watson asked if they were using grades. Mr. Bolen said yes still use grades for GPA. He said they talked about students who have lower reading levels and taking those the word used to be Language unit so Arkansas has high school classes English 9th & 10th and then 11th & 12th grade English and you read various passages. The students will work on their reading level and it will be a Language Arts and Remedial English class at the same time.

Mr. Bolen said the student is really focused on improving their reading rather than working on theories. He said they had tweaked that to a Remedial English class that really focuses more on supporting those students and improving their English through their high school grades. Ms. Weeks said they are getting letter grades on their functional level. Mr. Bolen said yes. He said the Remedial English classes the state says those are non-credit, however, the principal can make those local credits as opposed to the State Mandated 22 credits needed for a diploma. He said it would be to his discretion to award those credits and they would call those local credits. He said they still have to follow the State Mandated 22 credits. Ms. Weeks asked if this is reflected on their transcripts. Mr. Bolen said it will say Remedial English. He said they have made those modifications so the 180 reading we developed a curriculum to follow the students to improve their reading levels. He said the other thing to add is ASD may require up to 25 credits for some students who have really excelled. Ms. Weeks asked if they had a Gifted & Talented Program for those students he was talking about. He said they could offer it if the students needed that criteria.

Dr. Dickinson said that is what they were asking the board to improve in the Student Handbook. Ms. Weeks said she would entertain a motion to approve the handbook.

16-D-013 Motion to Approve ASD Student Handbook

Dr. Watson made a motion to approve the ASD Student Handbook and Ms. McLaughlin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Dickinson said the next thing to talk about is the Employee Handbook. She said she didn't think they had to approve all of those. She said all the policies had been approved with the exception of one addition and it is a staff dress code. She said during the strategic planning process this idea came up. She said several groups mentioned that the staff was not dressing professionally enough. She said they wanted to be viewed as professional so they need to look professional. She said they had comments from the community, parents and even from some students so they felt it was time to address it. She said they look at the LRSD policy and it was very strict. She said they discussed it at length. She said there were recommendations made and from those recommendations we developed a draft and presented to the Administration Team and we discussed it again. She said this is the final outcome from all of the discussions. She said it is professional dress code Monday through Thursday and Friday can be spirit day, off day, etc. but if meeting with parents, community members, etc. they had to maintain the professional attire. She said they would be purchasing uniforms for small groups of people on campus like our maintenance team.

16-D-014 Motion to Approve the Staff Dress Code

Dr. Watson made a motion to approve the Staff Dress Code as revised and Ms. McLaughlin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Dickinson said she had one more thing that was really for their information. She said this is the Employee Handbook. She said she had put the new dress code in it. She said one more thing that is not on the agenda but I asked for it to be passed. It is a statement from auditor that they asked us to get passed. She asked the new Fiscal Manager, Michael Krenn, to explain. Mr. Krenn said they were in the audit process when he started and ASD is able to do electronic transfers between two accounts on line which involved us to have a different monitor to come look at the transfer process. He said in the recommendation was to have the board approve language that wouldn't allow a new account to be created at the bank without the Superintendent and the board approving the creation of said bank account. He said that way no one could go create a bank account in the school's name. He said they have access to the Federal ID number and if you are a signer typically a bank will allow the signer to open a new bank account. He said this language was recommended by the auditor for the board to approve saying the superintendent is the only person to open a bank account. Dr. Watson asked what stimulated that proposal by the auditor. He said it is more of a prevention measure so that a new bank account can't be created by a signer on the account without board approval. Dr. Watson asked if there was a history of doing that. Mr. Krenn said no but he said he hadn't been here long enough to know about years past. He said that is why they put in there that it would be the current superintendent that way the superintendent is the one saying yes to the creation of a new bank but the board has to approve it. He said it is audit procedures or checks and balances. He said it is proactive and preventive. He said if we don't do this there is a possibility we would have to come back later and present an audit finding and go talk to the legislature.

16-D-015 Motion for New Bank Account Policy

Dr. Watson made a motion that a new bank account cannot be established for the Arkansas School for the Deaf without the Board of Trustee's approval and the current Superintendent is the only employee that is eligible to establish a new account at any financial institute. Ms. Weeks seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Watson asked if this had any relevance to ASB. Ms. Terry said they did not get the same finding. Dr. Watson asked what the practice was for ASB. Ms. Terry said that the Superintendent and she were the only ones that could open an account. She said that they did not do electric transfers. She said they ask for a check. She said she did not see any problem if applicable to both schools.

Dr. Watson asked at the end of the fiscal year, did ASD return any money back to the state. Mr. Krenn said as of now that had not been determined because they have until August 15 which is the 45-day rule that the state initiated. He said right now they had \$31,000 still left and expected to be able to carry forward at least \$28,000 - \$29,000 of that and hoping to utilize the remaining 45-day rule on some of the invoices they have in hand to wipe out the remaining balance. He said the likelihood is zero.

Ms. Weeks said she would like to make mention that before he (Michael Krenn) came the board established a ruling that the two state treasury accounts that if any money over \$25,000 was to be withdrawn it needs to have board approval. She said that was due to mismanagement before he came on board. Mr. Krenn said he did not intend to use cash funds unless they really had to.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Dickinson said she wanted to inform them about the strategic planning. She they are trying to work hard to get the information from a lot of different community groups. She said a survey was sent out to the community a lot of different ways. She said they gathered all the information and from each focus area had a team that reviewed all of the feedback regarding that area. She said now they have a final draft for the board to review, not for approval now but maybe for the next meeting. She said this was a roadmap for the future. She passed out copies of the Strategic Plan to the board. She said they could email any feedback they had. She thanked Michael and said he has been helping them and has worked hard for many long hours. She said she also wanted to applaud Ty Mathis and Brian Staggers for their work. She asked the board to come at 3:00 in August for a tour. She said the CONVO team had just arrived. She said they were going to start installing TV's all over the campus. She said they were going to have a new emergency information system. She said two new programs that are going to start in the fall are 1) 18-21 year old group – JR is going to lead this group. She said they started with two students that wanted to come back and now have five. She said she wanted the board to think about the corner outside the campus where the empty store is for lease. She said she has been thinking about what if ASD rented the store and gave it to the 18 – 21 year olds that they could help renovate it and develop a business plan to make a deaf store. She said they could learn how to run a store and cash register. She said she checked it out with Mary first and then checked out with the state to make sure they felt they could rent that space. She said the state said they would be happy to help. She said the state's real estate agent is negotiating with the owner of the store. She said she is going to bring in the contract at the next board meeting for the board to review.

Dr. Watson asked if this was something that VR could help with. Dr. Dickinson said VR has been happy to provide ideas. She said more to come. She said the last one is they are excited to start the 1:1 laptop program. She said they would start a phase approach where they would use some of the Silent Sunday money. She said in January they are expecting to buy laptops for all of the high school students and in the spring depending on the budget they are going to buy middle school laptops. She said they had long discussions that lasted for days on whether to use PC or Mac. She said they decided and voted to go with the Mac. She said the reason for that is Mac is very top of the line and innovated for deaf kids.

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

Mary Weeks, Chair

Dr. Doug Watson, Vice-Chair (Secretary Absent)