

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 Blind and Visually Impaired and the Arkansas School for the Deaf met for their monthly meeting on April 20, 2021.

Present: Dr. John McAllister, Chair; Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Vice-Chair; Faith McLaughlin, Secretary; Susan Pack, Board Member; James Caton, ASBVI Superintendent; Dr. Janet Dickinson, ASD Superintendent; Dr. Priya Gupta, ASB Parent Representative; Holley Mott, ASD Parent Representative; Jonathan Smith and Will Gorum, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community

Chair Dr. John McAllister called the meeting to order at 5:04. The next meeting is scheduled for May 18, 2021 at the Arkansas School for the Blind.

Joint Agenda

21-J-007 Motion to Approve Joint March, 2021 Minutes

Mrs. McLaughlin moved to approve, Dr. Atcherson seconded. Motion passed.

Action Items

Mr. Caton said ASB is leaving in place what has been in place for the year. No changes in protocols and procedures. Requires mask wearing in school buildings and on the school campus. The plan is posted on the website.

Dr. Dickinson said ASD had similar situation to ASB. Because they are a state agency, they are following the Governor's requirements for state agencies to continue using masks. Their plan does not change. One thing that has changed is the physical distancing, so students are 3 feet apart when wearing masks and 6 feet apart without masks (eating, etc.).

Mr. Caton said he included a survey amongst ASB staff and parents that shows how comfortable they are in wearing a mask.

21-J-008 Motion to Approve End of Year COVID Plan for ASB and ASD

Mrs. Pack moved to approve. Mrs. McLaughlin seconded. Motion passed.

Action Items continued

Superintendent Performance Evaluations for ASB and ASD were tabled until the end of the meeting.

Discussion Items – None

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

Arkansas School for the Blind

21-B-005 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement & Personnel Items)

Mrs. McLaughlin moved to approve, Dr. Atcherson seconded. Motion passed.

Action Items – None

Discussion Items – None

Superintendent Report:

Mr. Caton included several things in the packet this month
Information on Model Policy for Attending Meetings Remotely from ASBA
Model Policy on Voting included
ACT 182 is Board Training Act to understand the requirements for board training
ASB in process of planning 2021 graduation (5-6 graduates) – included outline of restrictions that will be in place since it is an in-person event. Limiting each graduate to 4 guests.
The ceremony will be streamed
If board members want to attend – let Mr. Caton know
Graduation day is scheduled for Friday, May 21st at 10:00 am in Woolly Auditorium
Included comments from this year's EAST Conference which was virtual
Reopened discussions with Entergy to explore ownership of the schools' electrical grid
Arkansas Insurance Department inspected the facilities – they mentioned the electrical grid
They said it was not sufficient for both schools – recommended that the schools have their own separate electrical grids
Alumnus Shell Green (President of the Alumni Association) passed away
Students are taking the ACT Aspire
ASB has decided not to hold the traditional summer camp program this year
Welcomed a new 9th grader from Mountain Home – Enrollment at 95
Held another vaccine clinic this month (for students 16 + and additional staff)
Will continue to hold clinics as necessary
Hill Cottage renovations continue to progress
Infirmary renovations – anticipate being able to move Health Services back in the building this summer

Superintendent Report continued:

Campus Fiber Optics upgrade is making its way through DBA
Magnolia tree did not make it through the storms – hated to lose it
Looking at tree sculpture artist-Alumni Association interested in helping out with the project
Reminder for the AAEA/ASBA Joint Leadership Conference May 4th (In person or Zoom)

Mrs. Pack asked if there was anything on a new board member. James said it was supposed to be taken to the Governor. He and ADE have reached out to inquire where the process is.

Mrs. Pack asked on a scale of 1 to 10 where would shared services be. James said maybe half way. He thinks a lot more progress will be made in the coming year. When the Personnel position is filled, it will be serving both schools even though it is a position under the Department of Education. July 1 there will be additional positions that will transfer under ADE like the IT position did recently. Looking to move Infirmary back in their building – ASD will be coming to share the building.
Also working on electronic records system to make it accessible to both schools

Mrs. Pack asked what the reasoning for moving positions under ADE rather under the schools as they are now. Mr. Caton said he thought it was a budgetary consideration. Early on there was a certain dollar amount that was transferred over that is shared services. When the positions transfer, the budget part transfers as well (is his understanding). He will get clarification. He said technically we are all employees of ADE, but there are certain positions they are moving over under that umbrella. Mrs. Pack asked if it still comes out of the school's budget. Dr. Dickinson said she thought the goal originally was to make those departments more agile. If there was a big need another department could go over and support them and vice versa. They also let us know that many of those positions will be embedded into our schools so that means they will be there every day unlike some of the other staff. Mr. Caton said like the IT positions stayed embedded with the school. Mrs. Pack said she never heard an explanation and she asked if any of them had to change from Teacher Retirement to State Retirement. Mr. Caton said he did not believe that it changed. Dr. Dickinson said her understanding was that nothing had changed.

Dr. McAllister asked how the Japanese massage deal was going. Mr. Caton said it was on hold. He said they had not formally brought it as a topic of discussion to the board. He said they have been doing a lot of research on it. He is not sure Japan universities want to share their curriculum and programming outside of Japan. He said there is massage program through World Services for the Blind (not Japanese). WSB has established program in connection with another facility and they say there is a very high employability rate. He said he would share more when he learned more. Mrs. Pack said it is in existence and has money behind it. Mr. Caton said there may be one or two kids interested in that in a particular year and it provides a really good career path. Mrs. McLaughlin said it would be complicated because Japan would have to align with a university and it wouldn't be just ASBVI students. There is a lot of international laws and rules regarding putting programs outside of Japan. It becomes very internationally complex and would be long and drawn-out. Mrs. Pack said if there is a program here why would you want to do it. Mr. Caton said he thought it was the different techniques that Japan uses.

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

Arkansas School for the Deaf

21-D-005 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement, Personnel Items)

Dr. McAllister asked if Dr. Dickinson wanted to talk about any of the personnel items. Dr. Dickinson said she would – Stacy Harmon is the new admin assistant. Stacey has been great and they are glad to have her. She is a graphic designer and has a lot of amazing skills. Another person on the list is one that many may already know and it is Austin Emery, alumni of ASD. He is married and has a baby. They are glad to have him working at ASD. Someone not on the list this month that they are thrilled to welcome is Roy DePriest, Director of Facilities.

Dr. Atcherson moved to approve, Mrs. Pack seconded. Motion passed.

Action Items – None

Discussion Items – None

Superintendent Report:

Dr. Dickinson said there were a lot of team members in the audience – Seth, Director of Food Services; Ernie, Director of Facilities & Janitorial Services; Nathan, Assistant Director of Technology; Kevin, Central Supply, M&R, Security; the famous Eddie Schmeckenbecher; Dr. Gretchen Cobb, Statewide Services Director; Donna, Director of Curriculum Instruction and Innovation; and Nurse Vicki. Vicki recently said ASD had their third vaccine clinic (over 200 vaccinated in the 3 clinics held). 74% of staff vaccinated.

ASD will have Prom April 28th

Invited Board Members to Parnell on May 18th for Parnell Hall Ribbon Cutting at 2:30

She recently met Buddy who is 100 years old and he asked if the Parnell Gym was still here and said he hadn't been in there since he was 18 years old

Townhall meetings have been held

Handouts of the power points used in the Townhall meeting discussions

Still working with ADE to develop a plan & feel they have great support

ASD is not going to do summer school this year

Candidate selected for the HR position & is in the hiring process with ADE

Meeting with KATV General Manager, Mark Rose and his team

Received ESSER allocation \$210,904.41

ASD has been able to do a lot of projects this year without kids on campus

Superintendent Report cont.

ASD has three things left they want to do: 2 new lawnmowers, replace the scoreboards for the football field and in both gyms and air conditioning for Central Supply.

Middle School is very creative always trying to think of how to celebrate the MS students reading books. In January they voted for the teacher to eat the bug (Mandy). Now they are voting (for the more books you read the more books you get) on which of four guys, Nathan, Jared, Ray & Adam, will get duct taped to the wall.

ADCC – Proud of the progress they are making. Kiley is in CNA training; Robert has two jobs (Air Force Base & Lowes); and Jalen is working at DFA.

Mrs. McLaughlin asked about ASD's graduation plans. Dr. Dickinson said graduation will be in Parnell Hall on May 20th at 6:00 pm. Limited number of tickets for each student's family members. Board welcome to come.

Mrs. Pack said the report on ADCC students – that is what it is all about. She said that program needs to be highlighted for what they are doing. Mrs. Pack asked Dr. Dickinson on a scale of 1 to 10, how she thinks shared services is going. Dr. Dickinson said for her it depended on the department. If you think about Transportation, she thinks it is a 10 because Steve is doing a great job with both schools. She said other departments she thinks would be a zero probably for custodial. She thinks Kevin is working well with Mike. She said right now the health center has not started any shared services yet. She feels there is a lot of growth to do in that area.

Dr. McAllister said they were going into Executive Session for Superintendent Evaluations. (6:00)

Executive Session ended at 6:58. Dr. McAllister said they were tabling the evaluations until next month.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Dr. John McAllister, Chair

Faith McLaughlin, Secretary