

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 August 17, 2021.

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

Chair Dr. John McAllister called the meeting to order at 5:03. The next meeting is scheduled for September 21, 2021 at the Arkansas School for the Blind. Mrs. McLaughlin reminded board that she would not be attendance for the September meeting.

Joint Agenda

21-J-013 Motion to Approve Joint July 20, 2021 Minutes

Mrs. McLaughlin moved to approve, Mr. Fagan seconded. Motion passed.

Action Items

21-J-014 Motion to Approve Mask Mandate for ASBVI and ASD

Mrs. Pack moved to approve the Mask Mandate for both schools with the exception of the children with conditions that prohibit wearing a mask. The Mask Mandate is to be reviewed monthly by the board. Mrs. McLaughlin seconded the motion. The motion passed.

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-012 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement & Personnel Items)

Dr. Atcherson moved to approve, Mrs. McLaughlin seconded. Motion passed.
Mrs. Pack asked with the hiring of an RN, is there a full staff now. Mr. Caton said unfortunately no. Samantha tendered her resignation effective Friday. Mrs. McLaughlin asked how they were managing. Mr. Caton said it is going very smoothly. There are a lot of logistics to be worked out in merging the Health Services. It is a much larger team now. Vicki and her team have really stepped in there from day 1 and making it work.

Action Items

21-B-014 Motion to Approve the District Support Plan

Mr. Caton said the District Support Plan includes the required literacy plan for the school that addresses the students in need of support where reading is concerned on the annual state assessment.

Mrs. Pack moved to approve, Mr. Fagan seconded. Motion passed

21-B-015 Motion to Approve the Ready for Learning Plan

Mr. Caton said this is the document posted on the website so parents would have some protocols and procedures as the new school year started. Currently it states we would highly recommend that masks be worn. It will be revised now that the board voted on a mask requirement and it will be posted again on the website.

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

Discussion Items – None

Superintendent Report:

First two days started out smoothly. Kids excited to come back.
Beginning the school year with an enrollment of 89. 34 K-6/46 7-12/9 STAAC. Five new students.
Expect the numbers to increase.
Good Professional Development week for staff getting ready for the new school year
Shared Services – Janet and Mr. Caton continue to work on merging the maintenance, transportation and health services. Challenges are mostly logistics figuring out each school's procedures.
Shared Services will benefit both schools. Continue to meet with department heads regularly.

ASB Superintendent Report Continued:

Mr. Caton spoke at the Annual Arkansas Council for the Blind Convention (held virtually).

Will be speaking at the Little Rock Founders Lions Club later in the month.

Scheduled for a slot at the Arkansas AER annual conference.

August 14th the West Wing held their Roundup for the younger students to register.

Secondary has been working on finalizing a PLC and also doing a book study "The End of the Molasses Classes".

Home-Life replaced the two RA vacancies

The Infirmary has 10 new electric beds, a wheelchair, linen cart, 6 transport chairs, 5 over-the-bed tables, bed linens, and 11 flame retardant hospital bed mattresses thanks to Vicki working with CURE for the donation. The board asked for name/address to send a thank you. Vicki said typically you would go to Fort Smith to pick it up but they delivered it for us. Looking really good – hopefully the board can stop by and see. Paula and Vicki taught 5 CPR ADE First Aid classes for both campuses. Provided professional development for the cafeteria staff at ASB. Vicki attended the Arkansas Nurse Conference and the Point of Contact COVID-19 training. Provided health services for ASB wrestling clinic and ASD sports camp. Held two shared COVID-19 vaccine clinics recently.

Hill Cottage renovations continue to progress

The Fiber Optic upgrade project is moving along.

The American Rescue Funds – this is the initial plan that was posted on the website. This will give you an idea of how we are starting to spend the funds. Welcome feedback from the Board.

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

Arkansas School for the Deaf

21-D-012 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement, Personnel Items)

Mr. Fagan moved to approve. Dr. Atcherson seconded. Motion passed

Action Items

Dr. Dickinson said the ADE Federal Statement of Assurances does not have to be voted on but has to be mentioned in the minutes. This assurance program is making sure ASD is compliance with all of the Federal requirements. It is done annually.

21-D-013 Motion to Approve the Teacher Handbook Addendum

Dr. Dickinson said she was presenting the teacher addendum, Statewide Services Addendum, Arkansas Deaf Career Center Addendum, and the Student Life Handbook Addendum. The reason for all the addendums is that it is important that teachers understand what is required of them, how to use different things, timelines for IEP's. There is a lot of good information in the addendum to clarify their expectations.

Statewide Services teachers who travel the state working with babies and their families - they do not submit grades. Wanted to clarify expectation for them and their specializations. The Arkansas Deaf Career Center is more for students and staff. Want to make sure structures are clarified. Student Life Handbook (dorms) – How the level system works.

Mrs. Pack moved to accept the addendums for Statewide Services, Teacher Handbook, ADCC, and Student Life Handbook. Mrs. McLaughlin seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Dr. Atcherson asked if they intend to add these to the future handbooks permanently or if they will always be addendums. Dr. Dickinson said she expected them to always be addendums because they only apply to specific groups of people where the Employee Handbook applies to everyone.

21-D-014 Motion to Approve the District Support Plan

Dr. Dickinson said ASD has a District Support Plan. It talks about actions that ASD is in the process of taking related to literacy, education support, policy of compliance and campus procedures.

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

21-D-015 Motion to Approve the Ready for Learning Plan

Dr. Dickinson said this is similar to what has been in place in the past. They have updated it with all the new information from ADE, DHS and the mask mandate requirement.

Mr. Fagan moved to approve. Mrs. McLaughlin seconded. Motion passed

Discussion Items – None

Superintendent Report:

Thanked James for explaining how the process is going with Shared Services. Both are very excited about it. Meeting every other Monday with all shared services supervisors. She asked Mr. DePriest to share his perspective on how shared services is going.

Mr. DePriest said it is going great

Involved in the transitioning process since June 16th. Del called to tell him he was retiring.

Del invited Roy to do a campus walk through of the buildings. Since that time, they have continually moved forward and progressed. He has learned more and more and met more of the ASB staff.

Already had a lot of success. Repaired AC in the Main Office, Marcus Smith has helped with the moving Wally helped Ms. Katie put together stools and cabinets. He feels like they are making it happen.

Roy has challenged his team to not use us and them language. Want to promote a new paradigm that it is one team. Both schools are going to benefit from this. Thinks it is going to be successful.

ASD Superintendent Report continued:

Roy said they are scheduled to have their first department as a team this Thursday. It is going to be the Shared Services Maintenance Team. Thanked both schools and superintendents for their patience.

Dr. Dickinson said she was going to have one person do a presentation of their leadership position in Shared Services to help people know what is going on.

Last 2 weeks been so busy but so much fun.

Had a big kick off with Secretary Key. He even used signed language. She was impressed with that. Welcomed new staff.

On Thursday last week they had a block party for the staff.

Had a scavenger hunt to help see all the new things on campus

New huge playhouse for the younger kids in the dorm

She had a power point for opening day and gave the board a copy

Kicked off the school year Monday with the Leopard mascot

Registration drive through on Sunday

Attended meeting at ADE with James. Ray, ASD principal and Lori ASD Braille Specialist

Proposal related to coding – one person from ADE who is a coding specialist come to both schools to team teach with the schools' teachers. James said he thought it was building support for developing a computer science programming for both campuses. Next year's 9th grade entering class will have to have a full credit of Computer Science in order to graduate. Appreciate the department starting to work with the schools now.

Dr. Dickinson thanked Gina for her support and thanked Eddie

Dr. Atcherson asked how many students registered.

Dr. Dickinson said not sure but estimated 130 approximately

Mr. Tim Curtin asked for a few minutes to talk about technology. He asked if they remembered the Project Lead the Way. It is a nationwide program. It has to do with Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). Introduce kids as early as 9th grade. They build everything from scratch. Mr. Curtin attended ASB with Roy. They didn't get to do things like that. This is an opportunity for ASB & ASD to have these programs. There is funding out there for this. He wanted the schools to know about this program.

Mrs. Pack stated that the board wanted a copy of an organizational chart from both schools by the next meeting.

There being no further business for the Arkansas School for the Deaf, Dr. McAllister adjourned the meeting.



Dr. John McAllister, Chair



Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Vice-Chair