

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 their monthly meeting on December 15, 2020.

Present: Roy DePriest, Chairperson; Dr. John McAllister, Vice-Chair; Dr. Samuel Atcherson, 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; Eddie Schmeckenbecher and Will Gorum, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community

Absent: Faith McLaughlin, Board Member

Chair Roy DePriest called the meeting to order at 5:17. The next meeting was scheduled for January 19, 2021 at the Arkansas School for the Blind.

Joint Agenda

20-J-20 Motion to Approve Joint November Minutes

Mr. DePriest moved to approve, Mrs. Pack seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Action Items – None

Discussion Items - None

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

Arkansas School for the Blind

20-B-027 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement & Personnel Items)

Mrs. Pack moved approve, Dr. McAllister seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Action Items – Proposed Virtual Learning after Christmas Break

Mr. DePriest asked if it was across the board for everyone to go to virtual learning after the Christmas break. Mr. Caton said it would be very similar to ASD's after Thanksgiving break they are currently doing. It will be for 1st – 12th grade students. STAAC, Pre-K and Kindergarten will remain on campus. Additionally, the campus will be open and staffed. All services will be open to all students, any student needing to return to campus will be able to return. The proposal is out of precaution with the hope that it will keep things stable when the students return to onsite learning. The dates are January 4 – 15th. Return date will be January 19th since the 18th is MLK Day. After Thanksgiving break we had a couple of staff cases and one student case. The longer Christmas break causes additional concerns and the proposal would be a good precaution to take at the that time. Mr. Caton has vetted the proposal through ADE. They had no concerns with it.

20-B-028 Motion to Approve Virtual Learning after Christmas Break

Dr. McAllister moved to approve, Dr. Atcherson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Item – Legislative Audit Report

December 3rd is when the Legislative Joint Auditing reviewed the report. The audit was much earlier. It takes several months for the report to be compiled and finalized. You should have a copy of the official letter regarding the report. This was for the two years ending June 30, 2019. They looked at cash on deposit, investments, expenditures, and capital assets. The result of their assessment was that it did not disclose any instances of non-compliance that was considered reportable.

Superintendent Report

Mr. Caton said since he compiled his report, several things have happened that he wanted to share as a supplement.

The former Easter Seals lot had a utility pole that was cut by a chainsaw. Do not know when it happened. It was the pole that helped service the old building. The pole was left in case it was needed in the future. When the pole was cut it fell down the side of the mountain that could cause the transformer to break apart which caused concerns. Morse & Associates was contacted and they advised him to talk to Nabholtz Environmental Services. Nabholtz put together a proposal to do testing in that area to see if there is any type of contamination resulting from that. The cost is estimated to be \$3,760. He will keep board posted.

Friends of ASB received a donation of \$10,000

New 10th grade student

Art teacher, Elizabeth Spilman, entered students in the Blues Heritage Youth Art Competition at the Delta Cultural Center. ASB had two 1st Place Division winners. First place winners got their work made into a poster. He is working on getting copies for the board members. Winners were in the K-5 division and the 6-9th grade. We had a 4th grader and a 9th grader win.

DHS gift shop, The Blue Umbrella, continues to sell pens made by the students. ASB students were the featured artist for the month of December for the gift shop.

Thursday will be classroom Christmas celebrations. Dam Good Pies in Hillcrest are going to bring pizza for the students/staff.

Cares Act Funding: One is the Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) and the other is the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEAR). From the ESSER, we received \$24,092.48 (remaining balance of \$1009.21). The bulk was spent on technology needs. From the GEAR's funding we received \$250,000 (balance is \$187,527). Using this fund for PPE, cleaning supplies, janitorial contract, cafeteria supplies, and additional technology. The School Law Seminar by ASBA will be February 9th. It will be a virtual training.

Mr. Caton thanked the board for their service and wished them a blessed holiday and Christmas season. Beverly made some different breads for you so please take a box with you when you leave.

There being no further business for the Arkansas School for the Blind, the meeting moved to the Arkansas school for the Deaf.

Arkansas School for the Deaf

20-D-0023 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement & Personnel Items)

Mrs. Pack moved to approve, seconded by Dr. McAllister. Motion passed unanimously.

Action Item - None

Discussion Item – None

Superintendent Report

Started their famous cinnamon roll patrol – delivering to state offices

There are cinnamon rolls for the board

Recognized Julia McKinney for making all the cinnamon rolls – 30 years

Staff zoom Christmas party last Friday

Food truck from Sauced on Thursday

Meeting with Legislative Audit December 3rd – ASD had two findings: one related to assets

Working to get that one resolved. The other one was related to staff staying on campus.

Staff are not allowed to stay in any of the apartments on campus – it is an unattended benefit

New Statewide Services Director – Dr. Gretchen Cobb

Working with Bellweather on the strategic plan for ADE

ASD Health Services chosen to provide BINAX rapid testing to staff for COVID-19

ASD approved to perform BD Veritor rapid response testing

Staff working on campus-wide projects – painting, floor waxing, power washing, etc.

Replacing all old wooden shelves & installing new steel shelves

ADE is working with them to get heat to the Lower School

Thanked Board for their support

Mrs. Pack asked if there was anything the board could do to help expedite getting heat for Lower School. Dr. Dickinson said last month they had several issues in regards to Lower School. She said she feels confident it will be completed before students come back. She said they are paying for all the repairs with the General Operating Fund (not going through Sparkfund). Mrs. Pack asked if she knew what the Sparkfund money is being used for. Dr. Dickinson said she has been told that the Sparkfund money has already been used with the other projects. The money they paid this month was to pay back for previous services. It is part of the subscription – the \$13,000 paid monthly. Mr. DePriest asked if Powers was doing the work in LS. Dr. Dickinson said they have done some of the work. Powers also works under Sparkfund. Mrs. Pack said there were many unanswered questions. Dr. Dickinson said it might be good to have a discussion with ADE. Mrs. Pack said she thought the board should do that. Mr. DePriest said he, James and Dr. Dickinson have a meeting with Secretary Key and Gina Windle tomorrow. Mr. DePriest said they had a meeting at ASD in October. He said it was intention to follow-up on the feedback received on the concerns they had raised and the board's role in the governance of the schools.

Dr. Dickinson said this is Roy's last meeting as Chairperson and she wanted to say how much they have appreciated him – he has been very supportive of the things they have gone through over the last year. He has been there for the schools.


Dr. Dickinson said she and James had asked him to come back for the January meeting to celebrate. Mr. DePriest said he appreciated all the support and it has been his pleasure and honor to provide service to the schools.

There being no further business for Arkansas School for the Deaf, Mr. DePriest asked for a motion to adjourn.

20-D-024 Motion to Adjourn

Mr. DePriest moved to adjourn; Dr. McAllister seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.



Roy DePriest, Chair



Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Secretary