

OFFICIAL MINUTES FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING OF THE  
ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

The Board of Trustees for the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired met for their monthly meeting on February 13, 2018.

**Present:** Faith McLaughlin, Chairperson; Susan Pack, Vice Chairperson; Everett Elam, Secretary; Dr. John McAllister, Board Member; Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Board Member; , ASBVI Parent Representative; Harry Pompeo, ASD Parent Representative; James Caton, ASBVI Superintendent; Dr. Janet Dickinson, ASD Superintendent; Eddie Schmeckenbecher and Will Gorum, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community;

Ms. McLaughlin asked about the promotion for Mindy Bess. Ms. Bonifas said Ms. Bess attained her Master's Degree and that is the reason for the promotion. Ms. Bess is in the Birth to Three Outreach Program.

**18-B-002 Motion to Approve Consent Items**

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

**Action Items**

None

**Discussion Items**

**GATE Presentation**

Mr. Caton introduced Michelle Tull, GT Coordinator. Ms. Tull said she came from Northwest Arkansas and began at ASBVI in August. She said she had a student spotlight to share also. Ms. Tull started with a slide presentation. The program format has been tweaked and has Arkansas Department of Education approval. There is a K-2 enrichment program and a 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> pullout program where she spends 150 minutes a week with those students. There is also Content Differentiation beginning with the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and going through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Content Differentiation will be served by a teacher with specific training for the student and can be reached through concurrent credit, AP credit or GT Differentiation training. Anyone can refer a student for evaluation of need for GT services. The information is on ASB's website if you would like to refer someone. She said she has a SAGE (Supporting & Advocating for Gifted Education) group. It is an advisory board, not a lot of work but need communication with all the stakeholders. If anyone is interested in serving, please see the website.

Several students were taken to the Student Leadership Conference held at Harding University this year. They had several college experiences in different fields. GT and Builders Club partnered for community involvement by taking donations for the victims of Hurricane Maria.

Ms. Tull said they had several students in the middle levels do entrepreneurial showcase with Arkansas Capital where they wrote business plans (10 pages) complete with spreadsheets, financials and forecasting out a few years. It was a great experience. They have a new partnership with North Little Rock's Arkansas Innovation Hub. She asked if anyone had been there - she highly recommended going there. She said the pullout program will be doing seven visits.

Ms. Tull said a big highlight on the secondary side is a special visitor, Arkansas Governor's School candidate Jordan Williams-Smith. He is going to share highlights from his application to Governor's School. Jordan thanked them for having him. He said he recently applied to Arkansas Governor's School and his area of study will be Social Sciences. He said he was glad to have the opportunity to partake in this experience. He said a couple of years ago he moved to New Mexico and while there he worked at a nonprofit greenhouse helping challenged individuals. He said they taught them how to plant, and do housework. He has also volunteered at Billy Mitchell Boys Club teaching kids how to paint and color and draw. Ms. Tull said Jordan was also a wrestler. If elected, he will be able to spend 6 weeks at Hendrix College this summer and should know by mid-March. Ms. Tull said the elementary spotlight was not able to join them tonight but it is Sarah Thacker. She said she is very proud of Sarah for writing this piece, "Rainbow World". It was a little too long to read but it is a 24-page short story. Ms. Tull said the piece was nearly at publishing level and she is working on her sequel. Mr. Elam said there was a writing contest at NFB at the national level for children's entries as well as adult. He said he would send her the information.

Ms. Tull said they could find them on the new website and thanked them for the opportunity to serve. Mr. Caton thanked Ms. Tull. He said ASB is still the only gifted and talented program in the US for the blind. He said he was very proud of Ms. Tull's accomplishments in the program.

### **Superintendent Report**

Mr. Caton said he would start with his sad news first – Mindy Bonifas will be leaving ASB. Her husband has been relocated out of state. He said it would be a big loss for the school. She has been so instrumental in accomplishing so much for the school and gets it done for the school. She has been an effective business manager but also a real advocate for the school and its needs. Ms. Bonifas said she was sad to be leaving and wouldn't be leaving if they were not relocating to Indiana.

Mr. Caton said some good news is that they heard back on the hiring freezes and caps. It looks like they are going to open the positions so we can move forward on things we need to do.

Mr. Caton reminded the board of ASB's Black History Program on February 27<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am and hope they can join them in Woolly Auditorium. It is always an exciting assembly that has become an annual tradition at the school.

He said he hoped they have had the chance to look at the new website and mobile app. If you notice anything that is missing or not working, please give feedback. He said he was very pleased with the way it is working.

He said ASB has a very successful Braille Challenge. He said Everett came and played in the closing assembly and talked to the students about the importance of braille literacy in his own life.

He said the school had gotten their new state car. It will mainly be used in the Birth to Three Program. He said they travel the state quite extensively.

He said they will begin taking bids for the water line project soon. He shared an email from one of the neighbors about a resource for the property (old Easter Seal) if the board would be interested in it. It is with the Natural Resources Conversation Service which is a division of the USDA. They mainly provide free advice to farmers but also provide advice to individuals on many topics including naturalized landscaping. He said there was chance they would be willing to talk to the school about returning the lot to its natural state. Ms. McLaughlin said she thought that would be a great idea. She asked if the land was still just sitting there. Mr. Caton said it was still sitting there and trying to grow some grass on it. It is an ongoing challenge trying to keep people out of it. He said maintenance still goes over and dismantles fire pits and debris and people will tear down the "No Trespassing" signs. He said the neighbors are very good about keeping him informed when they see people wandering around there. The police do patrol it but it is not a priority. He said the neighbors have been good about calling the police and sometimes they get there in time to intercept whoever it is but sometimes they are already gone when the police arrive. Ms. Pack said surveillance cameras are cheap now. She said she didn't know what it would prove. Mr. Caton said his understanding that the really good ones that are going to show anything are very expensive. He said they have looked at them for the campus for outside. He said when the water project is complete the intention is to put up a post and cable fence around the perimeter that will keep people from driving through the property.

Dr. Watson asked how far you have to leave a driveway open for the people that live about the property. Mr. Caton said there are a couple of neighbors that have back gates that face the property and would not want to block them. He said Del goes over and checks it and cleans if he finds anything. He said most of it is toward the back of the property close to the woods where people are out of sight.

Mr. Caton said the Entergy project has taken a long time on their end to get to this place. He said the last they heard they were working with their accounting department on some questions and issues they had about taking the lines back over.

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

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Faith McLaughlin, Chair

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Everett Elam, Secretary

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 February 13, 2018.

**Present:** Faith McLaughlin, Chairperson; Susan Pack, Vice Chairperson; Everett Elam, Secretary; Dr. John McAllister, Board Member; Dr. Samuel Atcherson , Board Member; , ASB Parent Representative; Harry Pompeo, ASD Parent Representative; James Caton, ASBVI Superintendent; Dr. Janet Dickinson, ASD Superintendent; Eddie Schmeckenbecher and Will Gorum, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community, Hillcrest residents

**18-D-002 Motion to Approve Consent Items**

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

Dr. Dickinson said they have a lot of wonderful people coming to work for ASD. Ms. McLaughlin asked if they had anyone from RIT. Dr. Dickinson said they have 2 interns from RIT. Dr. Watson said he was surprised to see they had hired that many people in the middle of the school year. Dr. Dickinson said they lost their Agri teacher in December and replaced him with Dana Lindner. She said they have been looking for a counselor for a long time and finally hired Melanie Brown. She said they are still advertising for an ASL fluent counselor. They had an Admin. Specialist resign in November and have hired Kimberly Dodd for that position.

**Action Items**

None

**Discussion Items**

None

**Superintendent Report**

Dr. Dickinson said in February they celebrated “Stop Bullying”. She recognized Becky Bell, school psychologist, who was the lead in the campaign. She said the Governor came and he signed Stop Bullying. He talked to the students about the importance of taking care of each other in the assembly.

Dr. Dickinson said January 24<sup>th</sup>, ASD held the Mr. & Miss Teen Pageant. They crowned Ethan Pompeo and Shannon Varner as their Mr. & Miss Teen ASD.

They attended the service honoring Doug and Myra Watson at the Governor's mansion. The dorms celebrated Valentine's Day with a dance. They crowned their Valentine King and Queen.

Dr. Dickinson asked Casey Brown to talk about Special Olympics. Ms. Brown said ASD won first place at winter games in floor hockey. One student is going to Seattle this summer (June 28 – July 7).

Dr. Dickinson said some of their teachers went to STEM training which help them have a deeper understanding on how to align STEM to their lesson plans/curriculums. On Friday they are having a special presentation by one of the Little Rock Nine, Elizabeth Eckford at 10:00 am.

In two weeks Dr. Dickinson will be going to Washington, DC and she will take 4 seniors with her. The first day they will go to Gallaudet University to an education summit. The next day they will visit the Capitol and meet the Arkansas Legislatures. The next day they will tour Washington, DC and the last day they will go to the job fair and try to recruit people to come to Arkansas.

Dr. Dickinson said they also have Deaf History Celebration – Stacey and J.R. will represent that. She asked Stacey to tell a little about it. Stacey said it is an interagency council they are working on to celebrate Deaf History. She said there will be a big celebration in the Capitol Rotunda. The theme is DEAF – D meaning diversity, E meaning Education, A is achievement and F is the future. There will be a reception afterwards. The culinary arts students are catering.

She said they continue to work with Behavioral Health Services of Arkansas for school based mental health. Kerry Ingram, on campus clinician, provides services to 27 students. Mr. Ingram stated in the last several years at least 13 states have been sued for not meeting the requirements of providing specialized care in the mental health area for the deaf community/culture. Mr. Ingram talked about getting a specialized deaf mental health program for Arkansas. Dr. Dickinson said they have been working together to make sure this is a good and positive program and also a place where this can happen. Ms. McLaughlin said it sounded like an exciting thing to be moving toward.

Ms. McLaughlin said if there were no other issues or discussion, she would adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 5:20.

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Faith McLaughlin, Chair

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Everett Elam, Secretary

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 February 13, 2018.

**Present:** Faith McLaughlin, Chairperson; Susan Pack, Vice Chairperson; Everett Elam, Secretary; Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Board Member; Dr. John McAllister, Board Member; James Caton, ASBVI Superintendent; Dr. Janet Dickinson, ASD Superintendent; , ASB Parent Representative; Harry Pompeo, ASD Parent Representative; Eddie Schmeckenbecher and Will Gorum, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community, Hillcrest residents

Ms. McLaughlin called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm. The next meeting was scheduled for March 13<sup>th</sup> due to Spring Break being the third week.

**18-J-004 Motion to Approve Minutes**

Ms. McLaughlin asked for a motion to approve the minutes from January 23rd meeting. Ms. Pack made a motion to approve the minutes as written and Dr. Watson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Action Items**

None

**Discussion Items**

Ms. McLaughlin said she wanted to make everyone aware that ASB Parent Representative, Jeanne Tribett, had resigned. The Governor's office will begin the process of filling her position.

Ms. McLaughlin stated, as a reminder to board members, if you are going to miss a board meeting, please notify Betty.

**ASB/ASD Transportation Update**

Ms. Bonifas said she had met with Central State Bus. She said ASB received approval for the fleet increase and will be ordering two buses. Ms. Pack said the board wanted an update on the weekend bus transportation since it was a new company.



Mr. Partridge said the transition with T-Star has been a rough start. He said there have been minor problems. He said T-Star was more of a charter service. The problem has been with their drivers. He said he could call the owner and it would be taken care of. One of the worst problems is this company is out of state and when we had the winter weather and were trying to get the kids home the bus company is 2 ½ hours away so it is hard to get buses to the schools quickly. He said he had to do the transport with ASD's fleet. Ms. Pack asked about the drivers' time. She said she had heard they are going over what they are supposed to go over. Mr. Partridge said the drivers can only drive ten hours in one span or work 15 hours total. He said originally when they started the drivers were staying in motels on Thursday night then they tried to put two drivers on the bus to offset but the owner found out it was going to cost him more money than motels because you would be paying two drivers – one driving and one sitting. Ms. Pack asked how many routes do we pay for? Mr. Partridge said there are 4 routes. Route 1 runs from here to Springdale; Route 2 runs from here to El Dorado; Route 3 makes a loop from Cove, AR close to the Oklahoma border to Hope; and Route 4 runs to Jonesboro and Marion. Ms. Pack asked if that was the same amount of routes with the previous company. Mr. Partridge said yes and there are two other routes but they are operated with ASD vans. Ms. Pack asked how the interaction with the people from the school that are riding as supervisors. Mr. Partridge said there was a major language barrier with the drivers and chaperones because most of ASD's chaperones are deaf. He said with the previous carrier, Arrow, had been with the schools for so long that their drivers had learned sign language. Ms. Pack asked if there had been any safety issues. Mr. Partridge said not to his knowledge. Ms. McLaughlin asked why the change from Arrow. Mr. Partridge said the contract with Arrow was up and the State says you have to bid. When the bids came in T-Star had the lesser rate. Ms. McLaughlin asked how long the contract runs. Mr. Partridge said there is a 3-year contract and a second 3-year renewable with a one year ?? 7 year total. Ms. Pack asked what he was going to do if they say they are losing money. Mr. Partridge said we would rebid. Dr. Watson asked if the schools require they accommodate the students. Mr. Partridge said Eddie has reached out to the drivers that if they wanted to come early on Friday he would meet with them. Ms. Bonifas said they could require them to come to training. Ms. Pack said for the record that next time you build into the specs she would like for the board to have input into it. She said she did not think this was a good situation. Mr. Partridge said they did ask most of those questions when going through the process. More discussion on the process and what should be added when rebid next time.

### **ASB Parent Representative**

Ms. Doan said two EAST students attended a full day training on January 25<sup>th</sup> that introduced them to Arduino (Arduino is an open-source electronic prototyping platform enabling users to create interactive electronic objects).

On a later date two students attended a Stand and Deliver training which touched on the basics of presentation preparation. A few students were able to attend a collaboration meeting with students at Roberts Elementary, as they are working on a project to make picture books for blind children. The EAST students are also collaborating with the teachers and administration staff at ASBVI to come up with solutions to some problems that they see.

In high school, writing is being strongly pushed across the curriculum. The students are being given opportunities to write daily in all of their classes. One of the high school students won second place in the computer solving competition at the FBLA District V Conference.

The PeeWee wrestlers had a meet on January 27<sup>th</sup> in Benton. The PeeWee cheerleaders participated in a halftime event at UALR.

The elementary students have been on a few field trips this past month that included opportunities for them to have hands-on learning experiences. 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grades took a trip to the Historic Arkansas Museum and ate at Larry's Pizza. Our 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> graders attended the play "Pinkalicious" and ate at the Purple Cow. Dr. Jay Powell, dentist, came to speak to the Kindergarten – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

The Braille Challenge was held on February 1<sup>st</sup> and was a huge success. There were 10 students from around the state that participated as well as ASB students. There were sessions for non-braille students that included braille bingo, blindfold sports, braille art and an EAST spotlight. There was also a parent education session facilitated by Shelli Moore, Birth – 3 Coordinator and Amanda Noles, STAAC teacher.

The varsity wrestling team will be competing at UALR this weekend in the State Championship Tournament.

### **ASD Parent Representative – Harry Pompeo**

Mr. Pompeo said ASD had a Parent Meeting on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Some parents attended using Zoom. School psychologist, Becky Bell, and school counselor, Melanie Brown, provided training on "Stop Bullying".

The ROAR (Respect, Organization, Achieving, & Responsibility) Store opened in its new location. Students were able to exchange their PBIS Paw Points for items of their choice.

The Academic Bowl team will travel to Iowa School for the Deaf February 15-17 for Midwest AB Regional Competition.

The culinary arts students went to Julie's Sweet Shoppe in Conway February 6<sup>th</sup> as part of their program.

The regular basketball season is about over and the records are Varsity Girls won 7 lost 13 and Varsity Boys won 4 lost 19. The GPSD Basketball Tournament and Cheerleading competition was held at Kansas School for the Deaf on February 8 – 10<sup>th</sup>. Track and Field will have their first meet March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Senior Shaq'ke Robinson was chosen All American Player in 11 Men team by National Deaf Interscholastic Athletic Association and National Player of the Year by Deaf Digest Sport. He was chosen to play in the All Star High School Football game by the Arkansas High School Coaches Association.

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

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Faith McLaughlin, Chair

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Everett Elam, Secretary