

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 & Visually Impaired and the Arkansas School for the Deaf met for their monthly meeting on July 16, 2019.

Present: Susan Pack, Chairperson; Roy DePriest, Vice-Chairperson; Dr. John McAllister, Secretary; Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Board Member; Faith McLaughlin (Absent), Board Member; James Caton, ASBVI Superintendent; Dr. Janet Dickinson, ASD Superintendent; Dr. Priya Gupta, ASBVI Parent Representative; Holley Mott, ASD Parent Representative; Beth Smith and Daisy Dippel, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community, Hillcrest Residents

Ms. Pack called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm. The next meeting was scheduled for August 20, 2019 at ASD.

Ms. Pack introduced Roy DePriest, new board member. She stated Roy had been on the board before serving five years. She said he has chaired the board before and he is the one responsible for hiring Dr. Janet Dickinson. Ms. Pack said he was taking Everett's place and will serve out the remainder of Everett's term (Everett would have been Vice-Chair for 2019). Roy will be the Vice-Chair and John will be Secretary so that the order of succession will be correct going forward.

19-J-011 Motion to Approve Minutes

Ms. Pack asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the June meeting. Dr. Atcherson made a motion to approve June minutes and Dr. McAllister seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Action Items

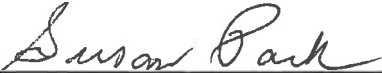
None

Discussion Items

Transformation Reorganization

Ms. Pack said Secretary Key was coming to the meeting so the discussion would be delayed until that time.

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



Susan Pack, Chair



Dr. John McAllister, Secretary

OFFICIAL MINUTES FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING OF THE
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Present: Susan Pack, Chairperson; Roy DePriest, Vice Chairperson; Dr. John McAllister, Secretary; Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Board Member; Faith McLaughlin (Absent), Board Member; Dr. Priya Gupta, ASB Parent Representative; Holley Mott, ASD Parent Representative; James Caton, ASB Superintendent; Dr. Janet Dickinson, ASD Superintendent; Beth Smith and Will Gorum, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community; Hillcrest Residents

19-B-008 Motion to Approve Consent Items - Minutes

Ms. Pack asked for a motion to approve the June minutes. Dr. McAllister made a motion to approve the June minutes and Dr. Atcherson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

19-B-009 Motion to Approve Consent Items - Financials

Ms. Pack asked for a motion to approve the June financials. Dr. McAllister made a motion to approve the June financials and Dr. Atcherson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

19-B-010 Motion to Approve Consent Items – Personnel

Ms. Pack asked for a motion to approve the June Personnel items. Dr. Atcherson made a motion to approve the June Personnel items and Dr. McAllister seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Pack asked Mr. Caton if he had any comments on the personnel items. Mr. Caton said ASB has several Residential Advisor positions open and they have been advertised, as well as an LPN (12-8 shift). He said two teachers received their vision certification.

Action Items

19-B-011 Approval of the 2019-2020 Student Handbook

Mr. Caton said there were not many changes to this year's handbook in regard to policy changes. He said one item added was the Sunscreen policy which says students are allowed to apply themselves under the new law that came out of the last session.

Mr. Caton said the other changes were updating names, titles, dates and wording. One area that changed a little based on Act 1029 was Anti-Bullying. One new piece of the legislation was that superintendents have to provide a yearly report to the board on any incidents of bullying and how it was addressed. Ms. Pack asked if it was done annually or after each incident at the next meeting. Mr. Caton said it would be done annually.

Ms. Pack asked for a motion to approve the 2019-2020 Student Handbook. Dr. McAllister made a motion to approve the 2019-2020 Student Handbook and Dr. Atcherson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Caton said he wanted to say that a revised edition of the ASB Employee Handbook is being worked on and he is hopeful that it will be completed by the August meeting.

Discussion Items School Improvement Plan (Changes)

Mr. Caton said he was going to let Mrs. Doan and Mr. Williams address the changes. Mrs. Doan said one of the biggest things in the plan is the Right to Read Act – RISE that ASB is going to focus on. She is in the process of becoming an Assessor. All teachers have to show proficiency in the Science of Reading regardless of their curriculum area. Teachers have to complete 18 hours of Professional Development specifically in Science of Reading. She will be able to assess the teachers for the Department of Education and verify the teachers are proficient which will mean they will be allowed to have a teaching license. If a teacher can't prove proficiency, they have one year to demonstrate the proficiency and then they are no longer a teacher in the State of Arkansas. That is how serious it is.

Mrs. Doan said she was going to speak to Elementary. Again, RISE is very important. They will be focusing on better student attendance, the reading initiative and physical activity. She said is very easy to become sedentary if a person is blind or visually impaired and can't see what is in front of you. ASB has put in place the additional minutes for recess – a healthy body is going to impact learning.

Mr. Williams said in addition to insuring that all ASB teachers are successful in the Science of Reading, Secondary would like to focus on becoming a High Reliability School (HRS) focusing on things that have been done well. ASB had good reading and English scores. He wants to increase those scores, as well as, increase math scores by 10%. Mrs. Doan said ASB's test scores were really good this year. Mr. Williams said they are in the process of planning a celebration for the students that received Exceeding and Ready.

Mr. Caton asked that they talk about the focus for absenteeism. Mr. Williams said he and Mrs. Doan came up with plan (along with the policies in place) that if a student misses 3 or more days they will get the instruction missed from their teachers and give the student an opportunity to make up that work. He said their attendance will still be counted but since instruction is so important, ASB wants to provide avenues for the work to be made up so Mrs. Doan has agreed to work on Saturdays and he has agreed to work on Sundays for the students. They are also going to open the dorms to those students to give them different avenues – you can't blame the student if they are not coming to school, some of them live so far away that if they miss the bus they could be out all week. Ms. Pack asked what the biggest cause for students being absent. Mrs. Doan said it just depends, one of the things is people have the notion it is okay to if it is an excused absence but it doesn't matter as the Department of Education says an absence is absence. It is more of a parent issue than a child issue. If you have so many absences the student is not supposed to pass the semester. She said she and Mr. Williams decided to make the commitment for Saturday school and Sunday school. She said sometimes absences are because of eye surgeries or other health issues. Mr. Williams said on the Secondary level that if they miss enough instruction, the school has the right to consider withholding credit. He said this was another way for them to have checks and balances. Ms. Pack said it is a big problem statewide. She said there was an article in the paper that talked about the different school districts and how much money it is costing. She said it was not only student absences but staff absences as well. Mrs. Doan said they don't like to hire subs so she and Mr. Williams have covered classes and teachers also help out by picking up where they can. Ms. Pack asked Janet if ASD had seen a big problem with absenteeism. Dr. Dickinson said she didn't think to that degree and she asked Ray what his opinion was regarding attendance. Ray said ASD has some of the same issues – some of their students live far away and if they miss the bus then parents are responsible to bring the student to school. It is an ongoing problem. Mr. Caton said you can't always prevent a student from being absent but can begin taking steps to help them get in the instructional time. He said he appreciated Mrs. Doan and Mr. Williams for taking the initiative to put things in place to help along that line in the coming year. Ms. Pack said she knew the online for snow days, etc. have been successful, have you tried that for students that miss the bus and are home Ray? Ray said the high school students have an opportunity to log onto their Google classroom and submit homework. It counts as an absence but they can stay on top of their class work.

Ms. Pack said the meeting would move to the Superintendent Report.

Superintendent Report

Mr. Caton said he was very pleased with the test scores but still have a long way to go. He said these are preliminary scores: Out of the 49 that were tested there were 15 Exceeded and 7 Ready in English. Ready and Exceeding are the levels they want all students to attain. There were a number of students that were close and in some instances it was only by fractions. Other scores: Reading – 7 Ready and 5 Exceeding; Science – 7 Ready and 5 Exceeding; Math – 9 Ready and 1 Exceeding. He thinks these numbers will grow and pay dividends for the school. He said they still see the challenge before them in getting more students in those two levels. He said they are planning to celebrate with the kids that made it this time. Ms. Pack asked if he would explain about the special needs kids and the testing. Mr. Caton said that has changed and a number of kids used to test under the Alternative Assessment for the state but there is always that one where the state tries to not exceed 1%. This year ASB only had 2 that tested alternatively so a lot of kids have been moved to the ACT Aspire which does present some additional challenges. He said they can always argue that is bias in one way or another toward blind and visually impaired kids. He said this is the assessment they have and this is what their peers in public schools are having to master. He said they needed to stop making excuses and figure out how to get these kids there. He feels progress is being made with this particular assessment. He said they are still advocating for the needs of the kids and getting the tests more in line so they can be successful. He said it is a mindset change or cultural shift. He said he has sent that message to the teachers. Dr. Dickinson said it was true for many of their students as well. She said they have developed a plan for other assessments in monitoring their growth and percentage of growth from last year compared to two years ago. ASD purchased NWEA mapping program – many of the deaf schools around the country are using it. ASD's team has met with other deaf schools that are using that same program. She said they also just purchased Curriculum Track which is a web based program that you put homework plans, lesson plans, strategies, learning resources and it aligns with the state frameworks. Ray said ASD had also purchased the ACT Prep for high school students.

Mr. Caton said another big initiative that will be different for ASB this coming school year is implementing a block schedule. He asked Mr. Williams if he wanted to comment on the new initiative. Mr. Williams said one thing that they have always struggled with is providing enough time in the classroom for the students. He said within the schedule there will be four classes on A days and four classes on B days and also built in is an activity period where the kids can be with their advocates and advisors, club meetings, assemblies (to minimize the loss of instructional time). He said the time would also be utilized for planning times for the teachers so they can collaborate during the day. The Fridays will look a little different as the students will go to each of their classes for a shorter amount of time (about 30 minutes in each class). After the students leave, the teachers will have that time to collaborate on Fridays as well.

Mr. Caton said he thinks this will pay big dividends by increasing the amount of time students have for instruction in their particular content areas. He is very positive about what the block scheduling will do for ASB. He said as mentioned previously, ASB is addressing the absenteeism issue. He said the Science of Reading will be a critical focus area in getting teachers to be proficient but he is committed to making sure every teacher knows how to instruct students in reading.

Mr. Caton said another initiative being focused on is Community Engagement. One thing being done is restructuring the Parent Teacher Organization to Friends of ASBVI Association. He thinks this will give a broader focus on the community as well as parents. Community Engagement was known as Parental Involvement. Rebekah Lewis, faculty member, and his assistant, Beverly Roy, will be helping to get this off the ground.

ASB has students from World Services for the Blind working this summer learning new skills. The students are working in the Instructional Resource Center and they have been a big help to that department.

Mr. Caton said campus projects being worked on is the next phase of the Infirmary renovations. There is a good chance they will be done with that phase in November. Playgrounds have been updated with the money the Foundation gave us (\$10,000). With some of the year-end funds a generator was purchased to keep the network server going in power outage situations, as well as two walk-in freezers in the kitchen. The wireless system is being upgraded to bring it up to date. He said a number of pieces of adaptive technology have been added for the students including an 86" Smartboard. Ms. Pack asked where it will be used. Mr. Caton said it would be used in different areas. Mrs. Doan said it would be used most of the time in the computer lab. He said refreshable braille devices had also been added. He said normally new computers were purchased each year, but this time additional memory and solid state hard drives were added to computers. This will get additional years out of these computers. Chromebooks were also purchased for students. Mr. Caton said repairs were being made to sidewalks and boiler systems. He said later he hopes to do an additional LED lighting project to replace the remaining pole lights that run in front of the school and the covered walkway in the back.

Mr. Caton said he had included some of the trainings in his report this time that the staff has been attending. He said funds are very limited for professional development – it comes out of travel/conference budget line. He said they get a very limited appropriation (about \$17,000). It may sound like a lot but buy the time membership fees to your educational coop, School Board Association, Council for the Schools for the Blind, etc. it takes a good amount out of it. He said he tries to figure out where they can best use the funds to get people the meaningful professional development needed, especially as it relates to blindness and visual impairments.

Mr. Caton said one he committed to for this coming school year is sending Lori Cole (Teacher Supervisor/Adaptive Tech Teacher) and Nikki Finney (Braille Transcriptionist) to the National Braille Institute Conference in October in Arizona. It will be a great opportunity for them to brush up on new skills and make new connections with resources that could be available for ASB. Ms. Pack asked if ASB had approached the Foundation about helping provide funds for people to attend meetings like that. Mr. Caton said he hasn't at this point but have plans to do that as the Foundation is able to release more of its funds. He said it would be good if they could take more teachers to the APH Conference in Louisville that he and Jena McDonnell attend in October. He said it is a huge gathering of people in the field of blindness. He said ASB is a big supporter of the AER Conference (Arkansas Chapter) that will be in September. He said he pays out of the travel/conference fund for ASB teachers to go to that conference because that is their professional organization. He said they also have a national conference that would be good for some to go to. He said funding does often present some obstacles but he is committed to working to solve so that more people can go to specific trainings that would be valuable to them.

He said calendar items to note: Staff will return August 5th for professional development week on campus; Employee Welcome Back Luncheon will be on August 8th; West Wing Registration will be on August 10th; school student registration will be August 11th; and the first day of classes will be August 13th. August 12th will be a field day for the out of town students that will be on campus.

The Madison School for the Blind reunion will tour ASB the first week of August. He said he was pleased that someone reached out to ASB for a tour. He is looking forward to learning more about that earlier time.

Mr. Caton said that was all he had unless there were questions for him.

Ms. Pack said she had received a message that the visitors were not going to be there for the meeting tonight. She said this would be a good time to take a few minutes to talk about the transformation.

Ms. Pack said how proud she was of James and Janet and how they are handling the transformation. She said there were good people here that are going to make this work for the best of everyone. She said everyone needs to keep in mind that we are all a part of ADE now and they are learning the same as we are. She said there would be big changes for ADE as well as both schools.

Dr. Dickinson asked James to start because he has attended all the Director meetings.


Mr. Caton said there have been three meetings so far with Secretary Key and his staff. He said it is sort of like the new Leadership Team for the Cabinet Level Department of Education. All of the agencies have become divisions under the larger umbrella including the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education. As part of this leadership team it gives us a voice at the table to advocate for the schools' needs. Mr. DePriest asked if he could be brought up to date since this was his first board meeting. Ms. Pack said she was going to try to get with them to see if we can have a board retreat locally to have them come and talk to the board. Mr. Caton said they would be glad to. He said it had been very positive and they are excited to work with the schools. He said he and Janet have tried to be proactive and make proposals that would benefit the schools as well as what they know would work for the schools. He thinks they are looking for input and ideas. Mr. Caton said the transformation is part of the Governor's reorganization of state government and it was approved by the past legislative session. It went into effect July 1st. Mr. Caton said both schools are under the Department of Education which is a new Cabinet level department that reports directly to the Governor. The Governor has reduced the number of agencies reporting directly to him. He said he thought the biggest change will be getting used to thinking we are employees of the Department of Education. Dr. Dickinson said they were asked to add a line under their signature saying Arkansas Department of Education, Arkansas School for the Deaf, etc. Mr. Caton said the director meetings so far have been the process introducing the work ahead and the different timelines the Governor has set as well as the different initiatives he wants to accomplish under the transformation. Part of that was forming a Transformation Action Team so each agency picked people to represent the agency for that team. He said that team will do a lot of logistic work and helping implement transformation as it moves forward in state government. They will begin meeting relatively soon. That gives an additional voice and input into the process. He thinks Secretary Key and his staff are open to input and so far this has been a very positive experience. He said he thought they need to relay this to the staff/employees and reassure them that positive outcomes and resources can come to the schools through this new relationship. Ms. Pack said she feels sure what is coming is some shared services again and they have already been talking about that. Mr. Caton said there may be some additional areas that will be added in terms of sharing services. He said this is a statewide process and is not just happening with ASB and ASD. He said they wanted to have a proposal on the table from the schools. Ms. Pack said with the two superintendents working together like they do there are things that we can be the shining example for others. She said the role of the board may also be different. There is a board over the Department of Education. Dr. Dickinson said all of her communication with Secretary Key and the Governor is that ASD/ASB board would be fully empowered. She said she had a list that the Governor asked Secretary Key and other cabinet level members to have: Efficiencies, Facilities & Space, Personnel, Reinvesting, Clean Audit, Streamline Services, less bureaucracy, and saving state and federal dollars.

Mr. Caton said there will be some very basic changes as well in terms of name badges, signage and logo - there will be the addition of the Department of Education. As previously stated, as directors of agencies they have a voice in that leadership and are going to advocate for the schools' needs as well as embracing changes and build collaborative relationships that will move them forward. Dr. Dickinson said Secretary Key said throughout this process ASD & ASBVI have continued to be champions. She said she appreciated that he sees value in the schools and he is willing to support them. Ms. Pack said they could be a great help in getting students here that need to be in ASD or ASB. She said there are kids out there that need to be here. She said her information is that they hope to be at the next board meeting in August.

There being no further business for the School for the Blind, Ms. Pack adjourned the meeting at 5:15 pm.



Susan Pack, Chair



Dr. John McAllister, Secretary

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

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19-D-010 Motion to Approve Consent Items - Minutes

Ms. Pack asked for a motion to approve the June minutes. Dr. Atcherson made a motion to approve the minutes from the June meeting and Dr. McAllister seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

19-D-011 Motion to Approve Consent Items - Financials

Ms. Pack asked for motion to approve the June financials. Dr. McAllister made a motion to approve the June financials and Dr. Atcherson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

19-D-012 Motion to Approve Consent Items – Personnel

Ms. Pack asked for a motion to approve the June personnel items. Dr. Atcherson made a motion to approve the June personnel changes and Dr. McAllister seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Pack asked Dr. Dickinson if she wanted to comment on any of the personnel items and Dr. Dickinson said no.

19-D-013 Approval of the 2019-2020 Student Handbook/Employee Handbook

Dr. Dickinson said they were not aware of the board changes before the handbooks were printed. She said they would make those changes and some other minor things that needed to be fixed. Ms. Pack asked if JuJu could come to the next meeting and take pictures and Dr. Dickinson said yes. Ms. Pack asked Mr. Caton if that was alright with him and he said yes.

Dr. Dickinson said they did not make any significant changes. Ms. Pack asked for a motion to approve the Student and Employee handbooks. Dr. Atcherson made a motion to approve the Student Handbook and the Employee Handbook and Dr. McAllister seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Pack asked Dr. Dickinson if there were any discussion items that did not get on the agenda. Dr. Dickinson said that Steve reported he is still waiting to get approval to bid out transportation. Ms. Pack asked Mr. Caton if he had heard anything on transportation. Mr. Caton said he heard the same thing that they are still working on it. Ms. Pack said she read Steve's report and the company that has it now has to continue until a new contract is issued. Mr. Caton said it was his understanding the company had been made aware they have to honor the contract.

Superintendent Report

Dr. Dickinson said she and some of the staff attended the ADE Summit Conference in June. They received some great information and it was a good time to network with other educators. They were recently told they would be assigned someone to represent deaf education. She said she would let James talk about the Director Meeting since he has attended more of the meetings.

Dr. Dickinson said ASD was proud that Leo was selected to be a member of the Future Leaders Council and will attend his first meeting June 29th.

At the end of June ASD had about \$100,000 that they could spend and they moved \$50,000 back to cash (they borrowed \$100,000 from cash). Melanie Hastings at DFA advised ASD to purchase things needed for the coming school year. ASD purchased mulch for playgrounds, smartboards for the lower school classrooms, Chrome books for the 3rd, 4th & 5th grade students, they are in the process of repurposing I-pads for the Early Childhood and K through 2nd grade, and a laminator for the high school. They purchased paint with grant money.

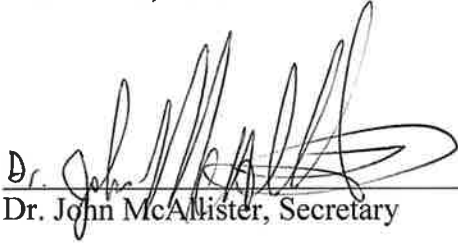
Dr. Dickinson said ASD's numbers are looking good. They have about 130 registered with a potential of another 29. She said they have about 7 two year olds.

Ms. Pack asked if there were any questions for Dr. Dickinson. There were none.

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



Susan Pack, Chair



Dr. John McAllister, Secretary