

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 May 19, 2020.

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

Mr. DePriest called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for June 16, 2020.

20-J-008 Motion to Approve Minutes

Mr. DePriest asked for a motion to approve the April 22, 2020 minutes. Ms. Pack made a motion to approve the minutes from the April meeting and Ms. McLaughlin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Action Items

None

Discussion Items

Meeting with ADE (Susan Pack)

Mrs. Pack reported on a meeting she had with Secretary of Education, Johnny Key and Chief of Staff Gina Windle. The meeting was held by Zoom on May 15, 2020. The purpose of the meeting was to relay the Board's concerns about the severe budget cuts that each school has been asked to make in next year's budget. The amount for each school is a little over a million for ASBVI and 1.6 million for ASD. Even if some money is restored later through Part A, B, or C funds the cuts will still be significant. Mrs. Pack relayed the frustration that because of different funding, public schools will not be affected by these cuts but even though ASBVI and ASD are schools they are still considered state agencies. Other state agencies are also being cut. Mrs. Pack told Secretary Key and Mrs. Windle that we want to be proactive and develop a plan that would work best for both schools. Since ADE has talked in the past about the schools sharing services she asked that we be given the opportunity to work on a plan. Secretary Key and Mrs. Windle said they did not want to do anything to hurt the students and do not want to eliminate jobs at this time.

They are aware that in the past the schools shared the following services: Business, HR, Transportation and Maintenance. Health Services were shared for a short time. They would like to see a plan that would share these services again. Food Service was mentioned but Mrs. Pack told them two cafeterias would be necessary. Mr. DePriest asked if Security was currently shared and it is. Mrs. Pack suggested that Dr. Dickinson and Mr. Caton work together to develop a plan to present at the next board meeting. She also suggested they present a list of names of people to serve on a team to do a feasibility study of other ways the schools can work together. Mr. DePriest asked if she meant other areas to cut or shared services. Mrs. Pack said other shared services to include other areas of operation. Mrs. Pack said ADE is part of a regional organization that has access to a consulting firm to help groups through this process. Mr. DePriest said a consultant would bring a fresh perspective of ideas that might be overlooked. Mr. Caton said that he thought a consultant would be a good idea but the school would not be able to pay for it, especially with the additional amount of money that is being transferred out of the school accounts for shared services with ADE. Mrs. Pack asked if he could explain that because she and the Board had just heard about it. Mr. Caton said they are still trying to understand it but it appears that all of the divisions of ADE will be assessed an amount of money for shared services. They do not want it to be looked at as a reduction in budget even though it is being taken from the budget. Mr. DePriest asked if he was referring to services shared with ADE and not ASD/ASBVI shared services. Mrs. Pack said that was correct. Mr. Caton said one position is being taken from ASBVI and they would pay \$255,000 for the shared services. Dr. Dickinson said they would take two positions from ASD and the school would pay \$375,000. Mrs. Pack said she expressed in the Zoom meeting that the schools are feeling like they are being taken over. She is afraid they are only looking at numbers and cost per pupil and not a special program. Dr. Dickinson said cost per pupil is high for all Schools for the Deaf. She also said they have many old buildings that drive up the cost of utilities and maintenance and this is figured in the cost per child. Mrs. Pack stated that she mentioned the building expenses in the meeting and thinks that could be something the feasibility study team could look at. She asked if there were any questions. Mr. DePriest asked if there could be more information by the June meeting about the consultant firm. Mrs. Pack said she would get that. The name of the firm is West Start Consultants and she thinks they are in Oklahoma.

20-J-009 Motion for Superintendents to Make Proposal for ASB/ASD

Ms. Pack made a motion for ASB/ASD Superintendents to bring to the June meeting a proposal of how they think moving forward with shared services can work for both schools. Ms. McLaughlin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. DePriest asked the superintendents to keep him and Ms. Pack aware of any issues or concerns.

20-J-010 Motion for ASD/ASB Superintendents to Bring a List of Names to Serve on a Feasibility Study Committee


Ms. Pack made a motion for ASD/ASB Superintendents to bring a list of names by the next meeting, June 16th, to serve on a feasibility study committee on how other services can be shared and how to proceed. Ms. McLaughlin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Names can be from staff or community. Dr. Dickinson asked what the ideal size of committee would be. Mr. DePriest said he did not think it needed to be very large. Ms. Pack agreed. Ms. Pack said she thinks it needs to be key people and needs to be an odd number.

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



Roy DePriest, Chair



Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Secretary - ABSENT

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 May 19, 2020.

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

20-D-004 Motion to Approve Consent Items

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

Dr. Dickinson said Stacey worked for ASD 35 years and she took a position with ADE Special Education. She will be missed.

Action Items

20-D-005 Motion to Approve Statement of Intent for Special Ed Part B Funds

Ms. Pack made a motion to approve the Special Education Local School District Application for IDEA Part B (611) & (619) Funds for the Provision of Special Education and Related Services for school year 2020-2021. Dr. McAllister seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Dickinson said most of this title reporting is for both schools and James is really good at explaining this. Mr. Caton said this is our Federal B funds application. This time they combined pre-school, we just started getting the pre-school funding this past year. It requires approval by the board. It is the schools saying they giving their assurances they are using the money the way it is required to be used.

Discussion Items

None

Superintendent Report

Dr. Dickinson said they decided to make their famous cinnamon rolls. They made 20 dozen and delivered them to State Agency Heroes: Governor Hutchinson; Dr. Nate Smith; Kay Barnhill; Larry Walther; Secretary Johnny Key & Ivy Pfeffer; Dr. Charisse Childers; Secretary Mike Preston; Department of Health COVID-19 Call Center; and Child Nutrition Department.

She said they had ASD Zoom party with the staff and they will have another one at the end of the year. They have had different team meetings via zoom. She said they talked about shared services. She said the teachers have been phenomenal with online learning. She said congratulations to ASD's seniors. They didn't have a full graduation as they normally would, but they are going to find a way to celebrate later.

Dr. Dickinson said if you remember there were four people that did not meet the SCIP requirements. One of them retired so now there are three. Of the three, one would like to transfer to another lower level requirement job. Based on the letter sent March, the termination date was postponed to the end of May. She was talking with Gina at ADE and she reminded her that the Governor has a strong opinion during the pandemic to continue supporting state employees. She asked if we could continue to postpone the termination date so it is going to be moved to July. Ms. Pack suggested they talk about it in an Executive Session next meeting since it was not on the agenda for this meeting.

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



Roy DePriest, Chair



Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Secretary - ABSENT

OFFICIAL MINUTES FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING OF THE
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The Board of Trustees for the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired met for their monthly meeting on May 19, 2020.

Present: Roy DePriest, Chairperson; Dr. John McAllister, Vice-Chairperson; Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Secretary; Faith McLaughlin, Board Member; Susan Pack, 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

20-B-005 Motion to Approve Consent Items

Mr. DePriest asked for a motion to approve the consent items to include the minutes, financial statement and personnel items. Mrs. McLaughlin made a motion to approve the consent items and Dr. Atcherson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Action Items

20-B-006 Motion to Approve Statement of Intent for Special Ed Part B Funds

Mrs. McLaughlin made a motion to approve the Special Education Local School District Application for IDEA Part B (611) & (619) Funds for the Provision of Special Education and Related Services for school year 2020-2021. Dr. McAllister seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Items

None

Superintendent Report

Mr. Caton said they have started looking at the certification program for teacher of the visually impaired. He said he has mentioned before about the reimbursement criteria and how it has changed. He said he feels it will hurt ASB in the long-term because they have always been able to tell new hires they have three years to obtain the TVI certification and with the changes in the criteria for the reimbursement they cannot now tell them they will get the tuition reimbursed as they go through the program. This helps ease the burden when paying for it. Now the criteria is the person has to complete the program,

teach a full year with the endorsement on their license then they can ask for their first reimbursement which would not be the full tuition. If they teach an additional year then they can ask for the second request and then teach an additional year then ask for a third request. It would be three requests over a period of years before they can get their reimbursement. Amounts could vary each year depending on the grants but it would not add up to the full tuition. It has really presented ASB with a problem. He said they have had a lot of discussion about it. It really hurts in attracting people to teach at the school because they have to go back to school and pay for it. It is likely when a teacher comes to ASB that they take a reduction in pay because their salary can't always be matched. Mr. DePriest said they could work 2 ½ years then find another job and then you lose good teachers. Mrs. Doan said if there is a hiring freeze you are in big trouble. Mr. DePriest said he sees the danger with the issues. Mrs. Pack asked if the teacher could be kept if they do not get certified. Mr. Caton said they typically do give them additional time to get it. Mrs. Doan said they have had to let people go before. Mrs. Pack asked who changed the reimbursement policy and are you penalized if they are not certified. Department of Ed made the change in policy. Mrs. Doan said even when the teachers get certified as Teachers of the Visually Impaired, the Special Education Department does not recognize them as Special Ed teachers so every year the school has to get waivers so the teachers are allowed to complete Due Process. She said ASB is a member of the Arch Ford Cooperative. UCA has an online Special Ed program that appears to be user friendly. The TVI program the teachers have been using is Stephen F. Austin because there is not one in the state. Department of Ed says if they are getting certified the teachers need to apply for the TOPS Grant. The teachers are not eligible because it is an out of state school. Mrs. Doan said what they are trying to do through Arch Ford and DESE with the board's approval is offer micro-credentialing. She said they have spoken to UALR, UCA, and another smaller school but by the time they can approve courses we are at least 2 ½ to 4 years down the line. She said ASB has really good teachers and are trying to keep them. Teachers have usually taken a pay cut to come to ASB and now they have to pay \$20,000 out of pocket. Mrs. Doan said she and Lori Cole (Teacher Supervisor) put together a program that is second to none and will not cost the teachers \$20,000. She said it is all about the kids and want the best for them. Mr. Caton said these are federal grants and there is never any guarantee that people are going to get reimbursed. Mr. DePriest said the process was easier right. Mr. Caton said yes they would get reimbursed every semester and it takes a big burden off the teachers. Mr. Caton said that they were going to have another zoom session with ADE Thursday regarding the possibility of micro-credentialing. Mr. Caton said he wanted to know if the board wanted them to continue to explore in that direction. He said they didn't know where it will go if anywhere but wanted to get the board's input. Dr. McAllister said he thought it was a good idea but UALR is not an option at this time. Mrs. Pack said she thought ASB should pursue the idea. Mr. Caton said he would keep the board posted.

Mr. DePriest said you are going to continue to move forward with researching options for micro-credentialing. Mrs. Doan said several other areas have micro-credentialing. Mr. DePriest said it sounds like UALR is not an option at this time. He asked if they had other avenues. Mrs. Doan said that is what they are trying with DESE's approval. If they will let ASB do micro-credentialing, if not schools get professional development approved through ADE. Mr. Caton said ultimately it may mean that the micro-credentialing does not necessarily show up on the license but that is not as important to him as the teachers getting the training and content. Mr. Depriest said you get to get and keep good qualified teachers. Mr. Caton said it may be that micro-credentialing could show up on the license but he doesn't know. Mr. Caton said Mrs. Doan was going to give the board a summation on what has been going on during this crisis.

Mrs. Doan gave the board a handout that was the COVID-19 Chronicles to show how hard the staff has been working with the kids. She said ASB has been mailing braille and large print books all over the state using Free Matter for the Blind. Teachers and staff members have been delivering braille devices, books, and materials to the students all over. She said teachers have been doing zoom meetings with the kids or Facebook. She said they divided the kids up in the four core areas that were required. The counselor did a Facebook group with the kids and the Social Worker has reached out to them also. The O/T and P/T did therapy through zoom. The Pre-K teacher zoomed with her students. The teachers have been respectful of signing up for times to be on campus. They had to wear masks and gloves along with social distancing. She said the small brown envelope she gave them are masks that the Family & Consumer Life teacher made for all the staff and board members. She said the school did a food pantry and boxes are made for any student needing it. Signs were made for the seniors to put in their front yards. She said she is so proud of the staff, students and parents. Mr. Caton said he could not be prouder of the accomplishments through this pandemic.

Mr. Caton said he reviewed the Wells Fargo accounts. They weathered the storm pretty good. Mr. DePriest asked who was on the committee to make decisions regarding the Wells Fargo account. Mr. Caton said it is himself, Breonda, and Susan. He said if anyone on the board wanted to be included they are welcome. He said he liked to follow-up with the entire board when anything happens. Mrs. Pack said she thought it would be interesting to tell the board what they were because she was shocked. Mr. Caton said they had 2 nursing homes and they took a beating and didn't have confidence they would be able to recover.

Mr. Caton said it looked like the school was going to get about \$23,000 from the CARES funding (Relief from federal level). He said they would look at how they need to spend it.

Mr. Caton said the audit for the fiscal year will start soon. It will be done remotely but they said they may come by the school.

He said ASB is planning a possible virtual summer session for parents that are interested to give kids additional support. Not sure of a timeline because of the budget cuts.

Yearbooks came in and he gave a copy to each member. Mr. DePriest asked if Mr. Caton was still involved with the yearbook. Mr. Caton said Stephanie Smith, Business teacher, has taken over the yearbook and has gotten the students involved.

Mr. Caton said they are looking at having a traditional graduation in the fall. The seniors asked us to consider doing that.

Mr. DePriest reiterated that each board member needs to try to go by or call each superintendent before the next meeting. It gives you a chance to be up to speed on things that might come up in the meeting.

There being no further business for the Arkansas School for the Blind, the meeting adjourned at 6:50.



Roy DePriest, Chair



Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Secretary ~ABSENT