

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 November 16, 2021.

Present: Dr. John McAllister, Chair; Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Vice-Chair; Faith McLaughlin, Secretary; Susan Pack, Board Member; Rob Fagan, Board Member; James Caton, ASBVI Superintendent; Dr. Janet Dickinson, ASD Superintendent; Holley Mott, ASD Parent Representative; Jaime Bilancione, Will Goram, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community

Absent: Dr. Priya Gupta

Dr. John McAllister called the meeting to order at 5:07. The next meeting was scheduled for December 14, 2021 at the Arkansas School for the Deaf.

Joint Agenda

21-J-020 Motion to Approve Joint October, 2021 Minutes

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

21-J-021 Motion to Approve Special Meeting Minutes (September 28, 2021)

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

Action Items – None

Discussion Items

Mask Mandate Review

Mr. Caton said ASB would like to continue the mask mandate
Starting to see a little uptick in the state among schools
One staff positive case recently (not related to school)
Time for 5 to 11 years-old students to get vaccinated – working on a clinic
No negative feedback received from parents – only support to continue mask mandate

Mrs. McLaughlin asked if he wanted to continue through December or January
Mr. Caton said he would like through December at least to get through the holidays
Dr. Atcherson said he would suggest that the board keep reviewing monthly

Dr. Dickinson understands the importance of continuing to wear masks.
Increased requests from the staff, students, parents and community to shorten time with masks.
Staff feels it is more difficult for students and difficult to monitor students.
More and more not wearing masks at stores, etc. making it difficult to enforce schoolwide.
She thinks it is important to consider an end date moving forward.
Mrs. McLaughlin asked if the staff adhered to the mask requirement or are they toning down. Dr. Dickinson said she has not officially told the staff but in last two weeks have seen more people becoming tired of it. Principal Boland said they use facial expressions and lip reading. They are missing communication and thinks it is the primary reason for the comments. They are having to take masks off to have a conversation and then put it back on. Mrs. McLaughlin asked if it could be optional.
Dr. Atcherson said to hold out a little longer till January.
Dr. McAllister said he agreed that they should wait past the winter season – err on the side of caution
Mrs. McLaughlin thinks it is a dilemma for ASD
Mr. Fagan asked if a decision from the court had been made on anything - Answer was no
Dr. Atcherson said at UAMS when in the classroom if students are at least 10 feet away from the instructor, the instructor can remove their mask. There are a number of ways to think about it.
Concerned that the younger kids are not vaccinated
Mrs. Pack asked when the vaccine for 5 – 11 will be available
Vicki said they started working on it today – vaccine will come from ACH
Sending permission letters home on Friday & planning on having clinic Dec. 2nd
Mr. Fagan asked her opinion on masks – should it be continued
Vicki said she wants to see what happens after Thanksgiving break
Dr. Dickinson recommended to continue with masks for another month till next meeting
Students will have had the chance to get vaccinated

21-J-022 Motion to Continue Mask Mandate (Until next meeting)

Mrs. Pack moved to continue Mask Mandate for another month, Dr. Atcherson seconded. Motion passed.

Security Contract Review

Mr. Caton said this is the last year for the contract
Dr. Dickinson said Whitney had asked her to add to the agenda – need to hold until December

Pay Plan for Grades GS01-GS-05

Whitney is still working on Pay Plan – Need to postpone

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

ASD Agenda

21-D-020 Motion to Approve Consent Items

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

Action Items – None

Discussion Items

ASD Acutities

Nurse Vicki said ASD only has one LEA number so the numbers are combined for Pre-K – 12.

She went over the categories in the report.

Level 1- 32; Level 2 – 23; Level 3 – 24; Level 4 – 28; Level 5 - 0

Superintendent Report

Received special award for board members who have earned at least 25 hours of in-service credit. This award is given to Dr. Sam Atcherson. He received a lapel pin.

Flyer in board packet – Thanksgiving dinner November 18th

Logo Competition – Asked board to vote on the top five

Final decision will be made next week

Will send to ADE graphic design

Facility Needs Assessment – Did not include every building, some already done. They got the report back this week. This is just to fix or repair issues with the buildings. \$30 million to fix the issues.

Six years ago, ASD had another facility needs assessment that was about \$20 million to fix urgent needs.

She asked James if he wanted to explain ASB's. Mr. Caton said it was done to do repairs only. This was

first time to have completed for ASB facilities. Still reviewing the assessment data. The cost was about

\$30.5 million for much needed repairs. Mr. DePriest said he hasn't had the time to go through it all.

The bulk of the report for ASB is 69% accessibility issues. ASD's is over 80% is accessibility issues. ASD's is 1701 pages and ASB's is 1666 pages.

Dr. Dickinson said next September she and James will be working with Secretary Key and his team to develop a plan of what will be submitted for legislation. Mrs. Windle said they have to find the money.

Dr. Dickinson said ASD alumni in the news this week

Ray Boland introduced 3 students that competed in the GPSD Triathlon ASL Bowl

Double Pride Café is back – 40 people participated the first day – thankful to have back

Social Media happenings

Ray Boland said ACT Booster Camp worth investment – Scores went through the roof

Dr. Dickinson said the board should have copy of "We Believe" – this is an activity ASD has recently gone over with the staff. Going back to what they believe about deaf children and what do they need to do now.

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

ASB Agenda

21-B-023 Motion to Approve Consent Items

Dr. Sam Atcherson motioned to approve, Mrs. McLaughlin seconded. Motion passed.

Action Items – None

Discussion Items – None

Superintendent Report

ASBA Conference December 8 – 10. There is a virtual option.
School Board Association Delegate Assembly will meet at 4:00 pm December 8th (Policy Making Body)
As a member of ASBA there is a voting member which has been Susan for a number of years
Would anyone else be interested in being the delegate – Susan does not feel she can do this year as she will just be getting back in town the night before hopefully. Let him know if interested.
Thursday will be the 14th Annual Turkey Trot (Fitness walk) after Thanksgiving lunch
Welcome to attend Thanksgiving lunch and walk afterward
Bells in the clock tower in the main building are once again in operation thanks to the Alumni Assoc.
It is a Carillon digital system. It is set to play the Westminster chimes and the time on the hour
Capable of playing a wide variety of tunes
Neighbors are enjoying hearing the bells
Alumni Association getting ready for their annual Christmas tree sale
Students are participating in the Poetry Out Loud Competition again this year
Students are working on annual Science Fair projects due December 9th
Update on EAST projects
Getting a lot of activity on Facebook and Twitter due to staff members working on that
FB page has reached 5,669 views -one post reached 3,757 people
Getting ready for Braille Challenge – will have virtual competition (January 24 – 28)
Continuing to expose kids to the latest technology for the blind and visually impaired
Purchased 2 braille coaches which is a complete learning system for students learning braille
AT department has partnered with the O&M department to teach students to use the OrCam
The OrCam is the most advanced wearable assistive technology using Artificial Intelligence
Still working on computer science initiative with ADE (Mark Barnes)
Infirmary project is officially closed but things are still being completed
Fiber Optic upgrade still in process
Swimming pool about to be up and running – repairs have been made - Heater is main issue
Continuing partnership with Superior Success to help students develop job skills
They also due ACT prep training – ASB has several students registered to take in December
ASB will have their Acuties in December

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



Dr. John McAllister, Chair



Faith McLaughlin, Secretary