

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 October 20, 2020.

Present: Roy DePriest, Chairperson; 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; Beth Smith Johnson and Will Gorum, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community

Absent: Dr. John McAllister, Vice-Chairperson; Faith McLaughlin, Board Member

Chair Roy DePriest called the meeting to order at 5:14. The next meeting is scheduled for November 17, 2020 at the Arkansas School for the Blind.

Joint Agenda

Discussion Items - Shared Services Update

Mr. DePriest and Dr. Dickinson met with ADE

It was a very productive meeting

Left meeting with action items

Held meeting with Del regarding ground services between the 2 schools

Held meeting with Ernie on custodial services

Ernie will meet with ASB's custodial staff on Monday (26th)

Objective: Bring about a 2nd roll out – no hard date – moving forward

Ernie toured with Del at ASB

Talked with Del about a schedule/organize work for grounds

School Dude implementation – Dr. Dickinson offered Del to work with Jamie (ASD) to train Del

Later decided it would be better for Emily (ADE) to train Del on the School Dude program

School Dude was in the process for ASB before COVID – it was put on hold

ASB has been working with Emily trying to implement the program

Mr. Caton will contact Emily

Mr. DePriest said it sounded like everything is on track and moving positively

Sparkfund Update

Dr. Dickinson thinks there was a positive move recently
Meetings with ADE on Fridays – Superintendents involved in the meetings
Sparkfund is not involved in the Friday meetings
Can express concerns to ADE
ADE has assigned Dan Davis to both schools
Ty and Dan check after Sparkfund has completed work
Have not seen full resolution to many issues
They are working on boilers
Have asked Sparkfund to fix the A/C issues that have been there since July
Increase in hours Sparkfund is working on campus
Powers is checking in before they go on campus to work
Mr. Caton appreciates the weekly meeting that was set up
Able to update Secretary Key on progress of Sparkfund
Gives the opportunity to voice priorities

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

Arkansas School for the Blind

Discussion Item – Report to the Public

Mr. Caton reviewed his Report to the Public reading the opening letter and touching on some of the highlights of the report. A copy of the Report to the Public was given to the board members. Mr. Caton said while the pandemic has presented some very challenging circumstances to navigate through, the school and the staff remain committed to moving forward in educating and serving blind and visually impaired students in Arkansas.

Mr. DePriest stated since Sam has joined the meeting, they could go back to Joint meeting business by approving the minutes for the Joint meeting.

20-J-018 Motion to Approve September Minutes

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

Action Item

20-B-022 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement & Personnel Items)

Mr. DePriest moved to approve the consent items, Dr. Atcherson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

20-B-023 Motion to Approve the ADE Statement of Assurances (Federal)

Ms. Pack moved to approve the ADE Statement of Assurances (Federal), Mr. DePriest seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Superintendent Report

White Cane Day was October 15th with WSB – virtually this year

Hot spot devices received for virtual students

Red Ribbon week (23 – 31st)

Welcomed two new students (7th & 11th grades)

Professional development day Monday, October 26th

Del got grant for Shade Trees on Playgrounds 2020 Program

Mr. DePriest asked about the Quails Forever project at the old Easter Seal site. Mr. Caton said it was a 3 to 4-year process to grow/develop and take hold. This will be the second year. They are monitoring it. Mr. Caton said when any of the board members are by, he would take them over to see the progress.

Mr. DePriest asked if the Braille Challenge has been cancelled. Mr. Caton said it is normally in February and he has not heard yet. He will discuss with Lori Cole to see if she has heard anything from the National Institute for the Braille as to how they will approach the event.

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

Arkansas School for the Deaf

20-D-018 Motion to Approve Consent Items(Minutes, Financial Statement & Personnel Items)

Mr. DePriest moved to approve, seconded by Ms. Pack. Motion passed unanimously.

Action Item

20-D-019 Motion to Approve Updated 3-Year Strategic Plan (With Changes)

Dr. Dickinson said it is the same plan approved last year with some changes. Since the students were sent home last year, they did not have the opportunity to make progress on their plan. They want to reset their timeline for the Strategic Plan.

Ms. Pack moved to approve, Dr. Atcherson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

20-D-020 Motion to Approve December Virtual Learning Proposal

Dr. Dickinson sent board email regarding the proposal

Started exploring the concept of what happens between Thanksgiving and January 4th when the students return

There are 3 weeks of instruction in December

ASD has students from 54 different locations in Arkansas

Thanksgiving important for families but opens up a lot of risk

Students could bring back COVID

Discussion with administrative team

Decided it would be best for students to stay home during December

Held more discussions with teachers – they supported idea

Dr. Dickinson sent survey to parents – result 73.3 % supported, 17% said no, 9% said maybe

Staff will not stay home the month of December

ASB is not considered under this proposal – have very different student bodies

Dr. Dickinson has had preliminary discussions with ADE, but will go through the channels

Mr. DePriest asked it would be sending all students home for that period or none. Dr.

Dickinson said the proposal is for all students to be sent home for the month of December.

Ms. Pack moved to approve the proposal, Mr. DePriest seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Dickinson welcomed Mary Claire and asked her to introduce herself. She said her name was Mary Claire Hyatt and will be the point of contact person for legal matters. She will try to attend as many meetings as possible.

Ms. Pack asked where they were on the cemetery. Dr. Dickinson received a call from the archeologist that did the work. They said they feel for sure there is another site adjacent to where they are. It could be 2 or 3 additional sites. They recommended not to pull up the road. They recommended to put grass or dirt on top of the area. You have to excavate to find out if there are other sites and it is expensive. They recommend to come up with a plan to honor the area since they know it is a burial site. Dr. Dickinson has sent an email to Greg Rogers about the situation. COVID hit about the time the assessment was completed and doesn't think they finished analyzing all of it. COVID put a halt on everything.

Discussion Item – Report to the Public

Dr. Dickinson reviewed her Report to the Public. She said there was a lot in the report that is already known. Board members were given a copy of the report.

Talked about staff/departments/teams

Talked about their decision-making process

Four Townhall meeting each month

Dr. Dickinson said they had representatives from the Arkansas Deaf Career Center attending the meeting.

Superintendent Report

ASD has 9 new students

Silent Sunday – Michelle said they are doing Silent Sunday different this year. They are still asking for participation. They are doing a social media campaign through the month of November. This year is more giving back to those who have given to Silent Sunday through the years.

Continue to do “Totally Awesome Challenge” with staff

Positive case of COVID in middle school

Middle school sent home for two weeks – returned today

Special campaign with ADE for International Week of the Deaf

Vicki talked about their acuities

Today was pre-bid for Parnell Hall for next phase (gym)

Transportation report difficult this year – students have choice of going back & forth from virtual each week

98 new desk top PC's & Microsoft 365 have been installed on campus

Virtual Homecoming – Traditionally ASD has had homecoming with football but no football this year so the students elected to have a virtual homecoming

Dr. Dickinson, Dr. McAllister and Dr. Glen Anderson are working to develop a plan/theme for celebrating diversity. There are five parts to the plan: Anonymous reporting for any concerns that may come up on campus; Diversity training for all staff; Recruiting/Marketing; Develop a celebrate diversity committee; and On-Boarding. They are hoping to kick it off at the next Townhall meeting.

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

20-D-021 Motion to Adjourn

Dr. Atcherson moved; Ms. Pack seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. DePriest', written above a horizontal line.

Roy DePriest, Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Samuel Atcherson', written above a horizontal line.

Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Secretary