

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

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 on October 17, 2017.

**Present:** Dr. Doug Watson, Chairperson; Susan Pack, Secretary; Everett Elam, Board Member; Dr. John McAllister, Board Member; James Caton, ASBVI Superintendent; Dr. Janet Dickinson, ASD Superintendent; Jeanne Tribett, ASB Parent Representative; Harry Pompeo, ASD Parent Representative; Beth Smith and Will Gorum, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community, Hillcrest residents

Dr. Watson called the meeting to order at 4:09 pm. The next meeting was scheduled for November 28, 2017.

**17-J-012 Motion to Approve Minutes**

Dr. Watson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September meeting. Ms. Pack made a motion to approve the September minutes and Mr. Elam seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Action Items**

None

**Discussion Items**

**ASD Parent Representative – Harry Pompeo**

Mr. Pompeo reported that Kevin Lentz, grant writer, has been writing many grants for ASD for a total of \$389,848 plus ASD funds. The funds will be used for buying Disc golf equipment for PE, Culinary Arts Program, fitness trackers and software for PE, greenhouse, archery, renovation of Parnell Hall, Art Show, Scholastic literacy program, screen printing press and a laser-cutting machine. In addition, Kevin helped to recover \$43,000 for the ASD Foundation.

The ASD Volleyball team went to Missouri for the GPSD tournament. There were 8 schools participating. ASD received 4<sup>th</sup> place.

On October 6<sup>th</sup> ASD students went to WorldFest at War Memorial. The students will go to the fair tomorrow. October 26<sup>th</sup> seniors will take CPR classes. ACT testing will be October 31-November 2. Silent Sunday is November 5<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Pompeo encouraged the board members to attend

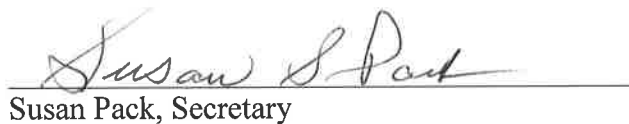
Dr. Watson asked what the ASD Foundation does. Mr. Pompeo said it helps support students. Dr. Dickinson said the ASD Foundation started when Susan Pack was Superintendent. It was a birthday gift from her husband to start the foundation. For the next several years the Foundation grew and was used for several things. Then for a time there was no follow-up with the Foundation, the money was gone and didn't know where it was. Kevin started investigating it and was able to find the money.

**ASB Parent Representative – Jeannie Tribett**

Ms. Tribett said she did not have anything tonight.

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

  
Faith McLaughlin, Vice-Chair

  
Susan Pack, Secretary

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**17-B-025 Motion to Approve Consent Items**

Dr. Watson 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. Watson asked Mr. Caton if he wanted to comment on the Personnel items. Mr. Caton said they have already made recommendations for the IRC position and the nurse position. He said Nicki Finney worked so hard to get her Braille certification and he is very proud of her. Dr. Watson asked if ASB has the authority to reward people that demonstrate a proficiency in braille. Mr. Caton said Ms. Finney would have received a 6% increase for that certification. Ms. Bonifas said the education and certification differentials are state-wide.

**Action Items**

**None**

**Discussion Items**

**EAST Program**

Mr. Caton introduced Lauren Ring, the EAST Coordinator. Ms. Ring thanked the board for having her and Nick. She said EAST was a wonderful program that ASB acquired this year. It is a student driven program where the students are pinpointing problems in the school and the community. She said the students have shown so much enthusiasm in what they are doing that the Little Rock EAST has noticed. She said so far they have asked ASB to attend two different EAST events that was an honor to be at. One was a tech event hosted by Facebook at UALR and 5 students attended. The students presented their ideas for using ????? (a virtual reality system) for orientation & mobility purposes and emergency preparedness. They also attended an EAST Initiative event called Encounter East. Two elementary EAST students attended. They took the 3-D printer from the classroom and worked on 3-D printing braille. She passed out examples.

The two students did a great job presenting and both were awarded EAST gold coins. She said since 2011 only 116 gold coins have been given out so this was a great honor. This is a new experience for them to be in a classroom that is student driven.

Ms. Ring introduced Nick Aikens, one of the EAST students. He is going to tell you what EAST has meant to him this year. Nick said he was in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade and is working to be a computer engineer. He said he is able to use all the technology in the EAST to help him. He likes that it is student driven. He said they have seen some problems around school they want to try to fix. Ms. Ring handed out business cards to the board and told them if they had a problem for the students to solve to please contact them. Mr. Caton said he was very proud of the EAST program and the direction it is headed. He said he knew it was going to be a great benefit for the students as they develop their career paths.

### **Report to the Public**

Mr. Caton said he would point out a few highlights to draw their attention to. He said ASB has a current enrollment of 95 students. He said under Achievement & School Performance: ASB performance has been listed as “Needs Improvement”. This status is based only on student performance on the annual state assessment which has been the ACT Aspire for the last 2 years. Under the new legislation of the ESSA that replaces the “No Child Left Behind Act” there is a lot of new flexibility that is being granted to school districts and they are hopeful that is going to help the overall status for ASB in terms of student performance. It does not just look at the state assessment when determining what your overall status. It is going to factor in other areas of growth. He said the school is beefing up their support to get the students to achieve at a higher level on the state assessment. He said the school is working (with staff and students) to change the culture that because the kids are blind they will not do well on the assessment. He said some things there are being done is implementing periodic testing throughout the year to help pinpoint some of the weaker areas and skills. He said they have also been implementing the STAR assessment in Math and English to get good data on how we can help students improve in those areas as well. The EAST program is going to go a long way in helping the students also. ASB is adding Advanced Placement opportunities for our students and have been sending teachers to training to offer those classes on campus. The R.I.S.E (Reading Initiative for Student Excellence) which is a state program that develops a culture of reading. Teacher Excellence Initiative: ASB continues to work toward the goal of having 100% of the teaching staff certified as teachers of the blind and visually impaired. The Vocational/Career Readiness continues to develop. ASB is partnering with DSB and World Services for the Blind in transition services for the students. This takes place after school and includes independent living skills and employment readiness. This program is still in the early stages but we are hopeful it is going to work very well. We continue with the work study program as well as Jump Start in the summer.

Technology Initiative: The use of adaptive technology is fundamental and essential to students with visual impairments. ASB has made major strides in integrating technology in the classroom.

Facilities Improvement Initiative: Improvements continue to be made at the school. A new roof on the auditorium is complete. Bathroom renovations in Prewitt Hall are almost complete. The roof on the Helen Keller Building is about to begin. Many other projects are in the works. ASB continues to seek grant opportunities for long range planning for facilities improvements.

ASB plays an active role in the state and city reaching out to blind and visually impaired families across Arkansas. Examples are the Birth to Three Program, Summer Programs, Prison Braille Project, the Low Vision Clinic, the Braille Challenge, Braille Boot Camp, Cane Quest and a local Wellness Committee.

Strategic Planning: ASBVI has adopted the following strategic plan goals.

1. Rigorous and specialized academic programs for blind and visually impaired students statewide.
2. Parents to become primary stakeholders.
3. Offer relevant transition programs and services that will promote life-long learning, self-efficiency, and personal productivity in our students.
4. Ensure efficient operations and accountability for responsible use of state resources.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Caton stated he was at APH last week for their annual conference. He said it is a very busy week but very worthwhile. He handed out an essay written by Jack Levine who founded 4Generations Institute which is an advocacy institute. It is not specific to blindness but to all sorts of areas in communities. His father lost his sight while in his fifties so he helped his father through that. Mr. Caton said he thought the board would find the essay informative and insightful.

One thing APH is working on in conjunction with the Federal Quota Funds is they started a campaign to get Congress to up the amount per student. The current amount is \$269 per student and they are trying to get the amount to \$1,000 per student.

Mr. Caton said ASB boys fall track team took first place at the Tennessee Track & Field Championship. The boys are reminding Mr. Caton that he agreed to let them spray his hair if they won first place.

Mr. Caton stated the school had a very successful East Meets West event. There was a good turnout and he is hoping this will be annual event for ASB. There was very good entertainment presented at the event. There was also good participation from the Indian community for this event.

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

  
Faith McLaughlin, Vice-Chair

  
Susan Pack, Secretary

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**17-D-021 Motion to Approve Consent Items**

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

**Action Items**

**None**

**Discussion Items**

**None**

**Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Dickinson stated it had been a good month at ASD. She thanked the Culinary Arts Program for bringing all the delicious food for the meeting.

Dr. Dickinson said she would like to recognize CJ who is attending her last board meeting tonight. She is retiring on Friday. She has been a tremendous support to Dr. Dickinson and will be missed. Dr. Dickinson introduced Michelle Dutasaca, her new assistant. Nancy Reynolds is also retiring from ASD and last Friday was her last day. Melba Willbanks passed away suddenly. She was part of the Middle School team.

Dr. Dickinson said the Arkansas Conference on Deaf Education and Career Readiness was a huge success. She thanked the board members who attended the conference.

Dr. Dickinson said she recently met with Troy Well, CEO of Baptist Hospital. She wanted to bring his attention to the communication needs of the deaf community in Arkansas. Deaf people have reported not having interpreters at Baptist Health and staff using children to interpret for their deaf parents. She felt the meeting was good.

Dr. Dickinson reported that 2 weeks ago Ray Boland and Rick Porter went to Gallaudet University for a job fair. She asked Ray to give a short talk on what they did at Gallaudet. Mr. Boland said on Thursday they went to the Department of Education and met with Department Chairs at the grad school to develop a partnership with the goal of recruiting when they are ready to do their internship. Ms. Pack asked if they saw the ASD boys and he said yes they did.

Dr. Dickinson said Stacey was not in attendance because she flew to Rochester today. Dr. Dickinson will fly out tomorrow morning to attend a job fair with Stacey at RIT.

Dr. Dickinson asked Brian to talk about technology. Brian said they were looking at campus wide infrastructure which is basically the cabling that connects everything up. He said they are working with DIS to bid this job out and will be part of the Rainy Day Project.

Dr. Dickinson said they have also been working on roofs and asked Ty to give a brief summary. Ty said everything going great and was not aware of any issues. He said they are 99.9% complete

Dr. Dickinson asked KayAnn to give a summary on assessment data. She said they are documenting ACT Aspire for grades 3-10. 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> graders will be taking the ACT. She said they are seeing some improvement with the test scores this year. Dr. Watson asked if they had a way to track individual student growth. She said they were currently working on that.

Dr. Dickinson said Ray, KayAnn and herself had been very focused on visiting classrooms. She said they have done 123 classroom visits this year. Dr. Dickinson asked Ray to talk about the 2-year old class. She said when they started they had two children. Ray said they now have 11 and more to come. Ray said they are looking for an Early Childhood teacher.

Dr. Dickinson invited everyone to come to her house for an Autumn Gathering.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 by Dr. Watson.

  
Faith McLaughlin, Vice-Chair

  
Susan Pack, Secretary