

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 September 15, 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

Chair Roy DePriest called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2020 at Arkansas School for the Blind.

**Joint Agenda**

**20-J-017 Motion to Approve August Minutes**

Ms. McLaughlin moved to approve, Dr. Atcherson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**No Action Items**

**Discussion Items – Update on Shared Services**

Dr. Dickinson and Mr. Caton met recently and discussed how to move the teams to the next step. Some teams are further ahead than others. Transportation has been working well for both schools. Ernest and his team have not started working with the Blind School yet. ASB has been waiting on getting the cleaning service in place for both schools. Both are in place now. There have been struggles with the grounds catching up with the grass, etc. – got behind on both campuses. The grounds are taken care of by maintenance and they have other duties than just keeping grounds up. There is a small crew to have to take care of two very large campuses in terms of acreage. Superintendents are going to work on a schedule to make it better for both schools. Dr. Dickinson said any complex problem needs a plan. If they know the plan they can schedule it easier and can respond to people if there are concerns.

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

## **Superintendent Report**

Dr. Dickinson thanked ADE for coming to the board meeting. She thinks it is a good step in terms of collaboration between the Department of Education and the Board.

Dr. Dickinson reported on the Ready to Learn Plan  
ASD High School had 3 positive COVID-19 cases  
High school returned from quarantine on September 14<sup>th</sup>  
Dr. Dickinson held 3 Town Hall meetings  
The word for 2020 is Encourage  
Infirmary has new RN  
Technology Department installed M365 on all new PC's  
ASD collaborating with APSRC to provide blended learning  
Many good things happening on ASD campus

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

### **Arkansas School for the Blind Agenda**

#### **20-B-018 Motion to Approve Consent Items**

Dr. McAllister moved to approve, seconded by Ms. McLaughlin. The motion passed unanimously.

1. Minutes
2. Financial Statement
3. Personnel Items

Mr. DePriest asked Mr. Caton about the Personnel Items. Mr. Caton stated:  
Robert Thacker (RN) is ASB's new LPN.  
Anthony Nastaci is doing secondary intervention resource in academics  
Cary Smith is in the Birth to Three Program  
Leslie Blaylock is the new 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher  
Terri Hunt is in the Learning Center  
Melanie Shepard is in the Learning Center  
Darby McCormack is a new Para

#### **Action Items**

#### **20-B-019 Motion to Approve 2020-2021 Statement of Assurance (Chair Signature)**

The Statement of Assurance is approved by the board chair signature.

## **Arkansas School for the Deaf**

### **20-D-015 Motion to Approve Consent Items**

Ms. McLaughlin moved to approve, seconded by Dr. McAllister. The motion passed unanimously.

1. Minutes
2. Financial Statement
3. Personnel Items

### **Action Items**

### **20-D-016 Motion to Approve Minority Teacher & Administrator Recruitment Plan**

Dr. Dickinson explained that the minority report is required by ADE. ASD's long-term goal is to increase their minority percentage by 1% annually. They have done that the last four years.

Mrs. Pack moved to approve, Dr. Atcherson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Discussion Items**

#### **Sparkfund**

ASD has made good progress. ASD has moved to phase 2. Powers will perform the work. There are a lot of complicated issues on ASD's campus. They are trying to assess those and gather the appropriate information. They will have to decide how to pay for it. The A/C needs to be repaired in many areas. Mr. DePriest asked questions about the different units needing repair. Greg Rogers responded. Mrs. Pack asked how many classrooms do not have air. Dr. Dickinson said 9 classrooms and 18 rooms in dorms. There is concern about the machines in the print shop. More discussion on Sparkfund.

Ms. Mott, as a parent rep for ASD and concern for kids, sent a FOIA request to ADE on September 3<sup>rd</sup> trying to get all the information she could. Brittney Kincaid sent Ms. Mott a response on September 11<sup>th</sup> with some information, dates and emails. Ms. Kincaid said they would send the rest next week. Mr. DePriest asked if an executed contract was part of the request and Ms. Mott said yes. Courtney Salas-Ford said she would like to address the FOIA request – the reason it takes longer to get is because when they are large such as this one, there is a lot of information. She said she could send a copy of the contract now. She said she could send to Dr. Dickinson to be shared with the board.

## **20-B-020 Motion to Approve Minority Teacher & Administrator Recruitment Plan**

Mr. Caton said the board should have a copy of the plan. ASB is continuing their partnerships they have had in place for several years with UAPB as well as their North Little Rock campus; UALR, Philander Smith and Henderson State University. Added goals are to develop working relationships with the NAACP Educational Services, Martin Luther King Commission, Billy Mitchell Boys & Girls Club, NLR Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, YWCA, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, and Future Minority Teachers of America.

Ms. Pack moved to approve the Minority Teacher & Administrator Recruitment Plan, Dr. McAllister seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Discussion Items**

None

### **Superintendent Report**

Michael Brooks, ASB's HVAC maintenance employee, passed away suddenly. He had 29 years with the state, 5 years with ASB. The funeral service is tomorrow morning at Ashby Funeral Home in Benton.

Mr. Caton reported on the opening of school  
Started year with 94 enrolled (49 secondary/45 elementary)  
Most students returned to onsite instruction  
Virtual learning is the biggest challenge  
Ongoing internet connectivity issues (onsite & offsite)  
Professional Development Day September 18<sup>th</sup>  
AER Annual Conference (Virtual) September 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>  
Each student/staff received 3 cloth masks  
MOU partnership established with Behavioral Health Services of Arkansas  
1 Staff member tested positive & resulted in 7 staff being quarantined  
Students/Staff doing a great job wearing masks/social distancing  
Infirmery renovations bid date – September 16<sup>th</sup>  
Gymnasium renovations continues to progress  
Mr. DePriest would like a tour of the gym when completed as well as the Infirmery

Ms. Pack said she had received inquiries about community sign classes. She asked Eddie if anything was going on or if it was virtual. Eddie said he had class last night in the Tornado Shelter. Mr. DePriest asked if that was a regularly scheduled class. Eddie talked about ASL classes/schedules.

Dr. Dickinson said every year in October, she has an open house at her home after the board meeting. She will not be able to have it this year because of COVID.

Dr. Dickinson said the meeting last month was in Parnell Hall and before that it was in the Leopard Spot. She asked what the board's preference was for location of the meetings. Mr. DePriest said his preference was the Leopard Spot.

Dr. Dickinson and Mr. DePriest talked about a request to go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel issue.

Mr. DePriest stated that an action was taken in Executive Session.

The board unanimously voted to uphold the termination of Ms. Farmer and deny rehire (meaning she cannot be rehired by the Superintendent).


**20-D-017 Motion to Uphold Termination of Ms. Farmer and Deny Rehire**

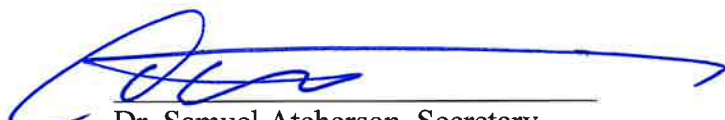
Dr. McAllister moved to uphold the Termination of Ms. Farmer and deny rehire, seconded by Dr. Atcherson. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. DePriest said if there was no further business, someone needed to make a motion to adjourn.

**20-B-21 Motion to Adjourn**

Dr. Atcherson moved to adjourn, Dr. McAllister seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

  
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Roy DePriest, Chair

  
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Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Secretary