

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 April 19, 2022 at the Arkansas School for the Deaf.

Present: Dr. Sam Atcherson, Chair; Susan Pack, Vice Chair; Robert Fagan, Secretary; Dr. John McAllister, Board Member; James Caton, ASBVI Superintendent; Dr. Janet Dickinson, ASD Superintendent; Holley Mott, ASD Parent Representative; Priya Gupta, ASB Parent Representative; Will Gorum & Jamie Harrell, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community

Dr. Sam Atcherson called the meeting to order at 5:00. The next meeting was scheduled for May 17, 2022 at the Arkansas School for the Blind.

Dr. Atcherson announced that there would be two departures from the Agenda. The Action item for the joint meeting, which is the Superintendent Evaluations, were moved to the end of the meeting.

Some students from ASD were in attendance. They shared about some recent experiences and successes.

In attendance were also two guests that had come and asked to speak, Mrs. Womack and Mrs. Hutchison. They are both parents of students at ASB.

Mrs. Womack spoke first. She said that the issue she was here for was not her child's education but the Home Life situation. She said she was here representing the parents of the boys in the dorm. She said she was not happy with how things were going and that they had had issue after issue. She said there were things from dorm parents sleeping to dorms being combined, things that were inappropriate. She said that she had emails in a packet for every Board member to look at.

She said that she wanted to know where the money is going that was going to these dorm rooms, as some students have gone a whole year without a shower in their dorm room. She said that there were multiple work orders done but that no one had done a thing. She stated that there were holes in the walls. She said that she lives 2 ½ hours away and that she wants to be able to tell other parents to take their children to ASB. She said that she didn't have to worry about her child's education, but that they were not getting what they needed from Home Life. She said that the children would tell you what was going on in the dorms that they would probably not hold back.

Mrs. Hutchison spoke next. She said that she was from Northeast Arkansas and that she was a first-time parent. She stated that the school had come highly recommended to her and that she did not have an issue with the education her child was receiving, but that she could not express in three (3) minutes her disappointment with Home Life and the Infirmary. She stated that she had had problems with the infirmary since the beginning of the year. She stated that she also had email copies that she had printed off and text messages and multiple work orders that nothing is being done about. She said that her daughter's dorm parent doesn't feel comfortable with having her own children in the dorm. She said that they had had severe issues with dorm parents in the beginning of the year She encouraged the Board members to talk to the dorm parents about how they are being treated and what they are being asked to do. issues in regards to how dorm parents were being treated. She said that this was because what she had heard was not very nice. She said that she had an issue with the combining of the dorms. She said that it was unfair to both the younger and older students. She stated that there was no stability in the dorms. She said that her child did not do well with the moving. She said that with the last move that happened she was given no warning. She found out about it when her child called her, crying so hard that she couldn't breathe, because she was being moved again. She said that the infirmary issues were addressed in print outs she would like the Board to read.

Joint Agenda

22-J-004 Motion to approve Joint March, 2022 Minutes

Susan made a motion to move to accept. John seconded it. Motion carried.

Action Items- The Superintendent's evaluation was moved to the end of the meeting.

Discussion Items- None

ASB Agenda

22-B-003 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement, Personnel Items)

Susan made a motion to move to accept. John seconded it. Motion carried.

Action Items- None

Discussion Items- None

Superintendent Report

Mr. Caton addressed Mrs. Womack and Mrs. Hutchison. He let them know that he appreciated their comments and feedback. He let them know that it was disheartening to him to hear some

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of these things. He stated that there were some things we were currently working on as well as working through some personnel and staffing issues. He said that would not resolve everything for them in this meeting but that he would continue to investigate and see what he could do to resolve the issues. He did ask Mrs. Hutchison to make sure she sent him the copies of documentation she had, especially the ones regarding work orders that had not been addressed in the dormitories. He said that he was sorry they had been disappointed in the school year and that he was committed to continuing to investigate and see what else there was we could do to resolve these issues.

He stated that he did include a count in his report. We have 43 elementary students and 45 secondary students. We have 17 local students staying in the dorms and 8 out of town students.

He stated that we had good attendance for our Talent Show and that the Spring Concert would be coming up in May. The EAST Team traveled to Hot Springs and brought back the Jurors Award for their exhibition and their booth.

The students returned from Spring Break to testing. The 11th graders took the ACT. Three out of the nine students taking it scored well enough to take college classes this next school year. We were proud. Some of the reading scores were astounding. Part of that is due to the fact that we have given our students multiple opportunities to take the exam and we have been offering tutoring. I want to thank the Education Team. Four of our students completed at the State level FBLA competition. They did not place but they did do very well under the leadership of Mrs. Holmes, our Business teacher.

This year Cane Quest was celebrated on April 4th, this was a virtual event. We had the closing ceremonies on the 14th.

We had our Easter celebration along with our beeping egg Easter egg hunt this past Friday. Over the years our Easter eggs have worn out. One of the bomb squad units from the Air Force Base made us one hundred (100) beeper eggs. They also volunteered to come and help us and one of them graciously dressed up as the Easter Bunny. The kids enjoyed that.

Prom will be April 21st. The kids are excited about having an in person one.

The ACT Aspire state annual assessment started today and will continue all week.

Arkansas author Nancy Pruitt will bring Weston the pony from Flying Ace Farm. This is a rescue farm for horses.

The Class of 2022 has four (4) boys in it and they are getting excited about graduating. We have approached the Foundation regarding sponsoring some scholarships for the students this year.

We finally added some additional staff to our Health Team. Tonja Hodge and Sherry Wagoner are both RNs. With the help of ADE we also have a CNA, Amanda Lang. We still have a vacant LPN position.

Ronald McDonalds Mobile Dental clinic came today. This is the first time we have been able to participate. We had a number of kids whose parents signed them up. Thank you to Vicki and Roy.

We had two additional vaccine clinics held this month. We had good turnouts for both of these. Since we lifted the mask mandate we still have some people that are wearing them. I think we did have a case of the flu the other week.

The infirmary also provided CPR, AED and First Aid classes to twenty (20) of our staff members. We will have additional trainings over the summer.

One of our graduation requirements is that our students take a hands-on CPR, First Aid and Stop the Bleed class. The infirmary provided this to our students last week. Our kids seemed to enjoy packing the wounds.

Vicki will be attending a school nurse academy this month this will be for both schools.

Human Resources has been working on an onboarding manual, we appreciate that.

The ANCRC grant funding meeting is coming up. We hope to get some additional funding to complete the Hill Cottage renovation.

We do not currently have updates on the water and electrical work that will be done, but we still believe most of the work will take place over the summer.

We are continuing to plan for the thirty (30) million that is coming to the schools on July 1st We will continue to plan and make priorities for upgrades to the schools.

The new health facility building program is currently going through the state process to get our architectural firm.

Some of the new tables for our cafeteria have arrived. These were the ones for our smaller cafeteria. We will have more tables coming in May. We also got our new hot unit in. This allows us to offer some additional choices in the cafeteria.

We had two (2) more of our Child Nutrition staff become Safe Serve certified. Our goal is to have 100% of our Child Nutrition staff certified.

Our graduation for seniors is May 20th.

The Alumni Convention is Memorial Day weekend.

Summer Camp will run June 6-24th along with the Jumpstart Program, but it will only run for two weeks.

Dr. John McAllister asked about the problem regarding our housing situation in the dorms. He asked if we had a shortage of staff. Mr. Caton explained that we have had people out and

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sometimes people calling in and that we didn't have a lot of playing around room. He stated that we had just enough if everybody is there. He said that if you had one person out sometimes you could make it work without doing too much moving around but that if you have two people out that it can be very challenging. He said that this has caused a lot of combining this year just in order to have dorm coverage. He said that this was not the ideal situation but that you still had to have dorm coverage when people are out. Our dorms are very small so it makes it hard to justify additional staff being hired. He said that he did support this though. He said the dorm numbers were very small but that these were also students with special needs and it's our responsibility to care for them in the best way possible.

Dr. McAllister asked if the staff that already had their 240 hours of comp time could work if they were willing to come to work. Mr. Caton said that would be them working overtime and that we did not have any overtime available right now. He said that if we did we would certainly be utilizing it for those people that would be willing.

ASD Agenda

22-D-004 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement, Personnel Items)

Susan made a motion to move to accept. John seconded it. Motion carried.

Action Items- None

Discussion Items- None

Superintendent Report

Dr. Dickinson thanked the students for coming and stated that she appreciated their work. She said that Levi Mott was the son of Holley Mott and that they were very proud of him. She stated that the movie CODA won an Oscar and that the students got to meet some of the actors when they went to Utah.

Dr. Dickinson said that there was a lot going on the rest of the month. She said that some of them would be attending the Conference of Educational Schools for the Deaf this weekend.

May 5- Athletic Banquet

May 12-Prom

May 18- Yearbook

May 19- Graduation 6:00 p.m. at ASB

May 25- 8th Grade Move Up

May 26- 5th Grade Move Up

May 27- Last day for students

The logo on the Board packet that was handed out was the one that won. There are some options for our official logo. If you would look at them and that put a mark by the one you like best that would be great. You can turn your vote in to Michelle. Next month we will be able to share with you what our new academic logo will look like.

Dr. Dickinson said that they were rolling out their communication app that is an all-inclusive communication app. She said that they were starting to get parents and staff registered for it.

Dr. Dickinson said that April is our evaluation month and that it is a lot of work. She said that for many years she has met with departments without their supervisors to get some direct honest feedback on how things are going. She said that at first it was a little awkward but that now 99.9% are bragging on their supervisors so it's been really positive. She stated that now she is meeting with groups of students.

Dr. Dickinson said that their statewide services is starting to meet every month with Children's Hospital. She said that this has been a good rapport building opportunity.

She said that the ADE Summit is coming up soon and that they always do a good job. She said that they will be having some people presenting.

Dr. Dickinson stated that this month their statewide services has served children in 29 different cities. Melody Brown has visited ten (10) different school districts and has found thirteen (13) more deaf kids.

Lower school has Fun Fridays. They have presenters almost every Friday. They have had the Red Cross, meteorologist Todd Yakoubian, Officer Curt and the K-9 dog to name a few.

The students have participated in Skills USA for many years and they have done well. Our two culinary arts students won silver for each item they cooked. We also had students that did opening and closing celebrations. All together we had seven (7) students. They won first in the State of Arkansas. They will be going to Atlanta Georgia in June for the National Competition.

Dr. Dickinson said that they have a new staff member in their office, Chloe Smith. She is the new receptionist but she is also handling all the media. Since she has arrived Facebook is up 28.5. Instagram had a 1200 increase.

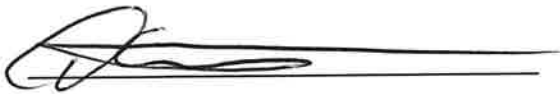
Dr. Dickinson said that they have gotten several grants. One was for \$50,000.00 for summer camp. She also said that their budget is looking very good. We are going to have a phenomenal summer camp.

During COVID many students came back to school with trauma related to COVID. Dr. Dickinson said that many of their deaf students had traumatic experiences. She said she didn't feel like they had the in-depth experience to meet this depth of a need. So, they started researching and

working on a document. The document, Steps and Strategies for Mental Health is almost complete and they are very excited about it.

An Executive Session was called so that the Board could complete the Superintendent's evaluations.

The Executive Session ended and the meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.



Dr. Sam Atcherson, Chair



Rob Fagan, Secretary

