

OFFICIAL MINUTES FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING OF THE  
ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND 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 August 15, 2023, at the Arkansas School for the Deaf.

**Present:** Susan Pack, Chair; Robert Fagan, Vice Chair; Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Board Member; James Caton, ASBVI Superintendent; Dr. Gretchen Cobb, ASD Interim Superintendent; Dr. Priya Gupta, ASBVI Parent Representative; Will Gorum and Sydney Morris, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community

**Absent:** Dr. John McAllister, Secretary; Philip Garner, Board Member; Holley Mott, ASD Parent Representative

Mrs. Pack called the meeting to order at 5:03pm. The September board meeting will take place on September 19, 2023, at the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

**Joint Agenda**

**23-J-031 Motion to Approve Joint Meeting July 2023 Minutes**

Mr. Fagan made a motion to approve. Dr. Atcherson seconded. Motion Carried.

**23-J-031 Motion to Approve Special Meeting August 2023 Minutes**

Dr. Atcherson made a motion to approve. Mr. Fagan seconded. Motion Carried.

**Action Items –**

**District Support Plans for ASBVI & ASD**

Mr. Caton for ASBVI, plan includes new part on the LEARNS act to show how ASBVI will address those areas for LEARNS. This plan is intended to support the Elementary and Secondary support plans previously submitted. Includes updates to literacy with goals and reflected growth in Literacy.

No ASD updates or comments.

Mr. Fagan made a motion to approve. Dr. Atcherson seconded. Motion Carried.

**ADE Statement of Assurances for ASBVI & ASD**

Per Mr. Caton, the Statement of Assurances is to show that each school is in compliance with ADE standards of accreditation.

Mr. Fagan made a motion to approve. Dr. Atcherson seconded. Motion Carried.

### **Policy Updates for Employee Handbook for ASBVI & ASD**

Ms. Young, ADE, stated the legislature's added foster care plan that gives up to 40 hours of leave. The maternity leave has gone up from four weeks of leave to twelve weeks of paid leave. The maternity leave will run in conjunction with Family Medical Leave.

Dr. Atcherson made a motion to approve. Mr. Fagan seconded. Motion Carried.

### **Discussion Items –**

#### **Commissioned School Safety Officer (CSSO)**

Mr. Kenreich discussed the importance of safety as both schools are very vulnerable. In 2022, legislatures stated schools need a School Resource Officer (SRO) or CSSO. An SRO is a law enforcement officer, whereas a CSSO is an employee who receives 60-hour training across three phases. Training would be conducted by Bentonville Captain. Mr. Kenreich asked for permission to conduct training in September. The employees trained would include those that are part of the school's Emergency Response Team (ERT). The CSSO Program is coordinated by Ark. State Police (ASP) and handles all the licensing.

Mrs. Pack inquired about cost associated with CSSO Program. Mr. Kenreich stated the cost associated is \$2,200 per person with a minimum of ten attendees per class.

Dr. Cobb and Mr. Caton expressed thoughts on the benefits of the training piece, as well as their concerns regarding liability of armed employees. Mr. Caton recommends that staff and families are polled before a decision is made.

ADE stated that additional training options and legality need to be reviewed and considered.

Mr. Fagan made a motion to table the CSSO Program until more information is received. Dr. Atcherson seconded. Motion Carried.

### **Region 14 Report**

Mrs. Pack encourages board members to review reports from region 14 regarding the meetings held at ASD and ASBVI, including suggestions for change, and follow-up with school Superintendents.

## **ASBVI Agenda**

### **23-B-032 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement, Personnel Items)**

Mr. Fagan made a motion to approve. Dr. Atcherson seconded. Motion Carried.

### **Action Items** - None

### **Discussion Items –**

Board of Trustees Meeting  
Arkansas School for the Blind  
Arkansas School for the Deaf  
Page 2  
August 15, 2023

### **Budget Financials**

Mr. Caton discussed the snapshot of financials as of the end of July, including salaries and operating expenses, as well as committed funds not yet spent.

### **Superintendent Report**

Exciting time welcoming kids back to school.

Saturday, west wing round-up for STAAC, Pre-K, and K kids.

Sunday, Aug. 13 Open House

Alumni brought Kona Ice Sunday and Monday

Received approval to post science teacher position.

Approval to post RN position.

Hired three resident advisors.

Currently 85 positions are filled of 91 agency cap.

Waiting to hear about skilled tradesman position.

Special Education / Teacher Supervision request for advertisement sent.

74 kids enrolled, 8 new students and 2 more pending.

Teacher welcome back week was relaxed and fun. A lot of celebrations.

Meaningful PD completed week before school started.

Educational theme for year: "Let the adventure begin; we will soar in 2023-24"

C. Barnes, OCSS, started visiting campus to support and learn more about our programs.

Adaptive technology assessment.

NWEA testing is coming up.

Last year's score returned from ACT Aspire, excited to see areas of student growth.

Received final AED equipment in the gym.

Three CPR/AED/First Aid classes this past summer.

Initiative on becoming a heart safe school with Ark. Child. Hospital.

Working to get health service building functional. Lost a lot of supplies and medication.

Completed water line project.

Continued cottage renovation. Completion date is nearing November 2023.

HVAC issues are ongoing.

Ms. Pack asked about a building generator for the infirmary. Mr. Caton mentioned an existing generator for medication fridge and necessary lights. Looking into larger generator to keep also run AC unit.

### **ASD Agenda**

#### **23-D-033 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement, Personnel Items)**

Dr. Atcherson made a motion to approve. Mr. Fagan seconded. Motion Carried.

#### **Action Items** –

Board of Trustees Meeting  
Arkansas School for the Blind  
Arkansas School for the Deaf

Page 3

August 15, 2023

### **Admissions Policy**

Dr. Cobb stated the admission policy was refined as part of the corrective action plan. Ms. Smith spoke on the minor changes to ensure the policy aligned with all applicable Ark. Codes and streamline the process. This includes an intake application, meet and greet, audiogram, records request, and eligibility determination. Additionally working in-line with both Principals and if applicable, dorm supervisors. 111 current students. 5 new started this week, 58 dorm students, 1 returning student, a couple in the queue, and 11 perspective students.

Board approval pending September meeting.

### **Discussion Items –**

#### **Superintendent Search Report**

Mrs. Pack provided a brief report on the Superintendent search. After the end of August, the board will begin the process and applications will be provided to the committee. Mr. Kenreich is the search committee chair.

#### **Superintendent Report**

Met with Secretary Oliva about OCSS team to offer support.

C. Barnes, OCSS and team, started visiting campus.

W. Raney helped get trees removed to prevent power outages.

Looking into AC repair for lower school.

Receiving a lot of support from ADE. Helping with school leadership.

Past Friday attended Lunch'n Learn in Ft. Smith along with H.S. Principal.

Child nutrition went to Colorado to learn about new products and fresh ideas.

Speech busy over the summer. Presented at ADE summit and UAMS research.

Full on-sight monitoring this year. First visit September 12-14

Completed large session of CAP training for staff. DESE provided required components for training.

Staff completed CPI, mental health, and behavioral central training.

Statewide service department, service coordinator accepted new position.

Received extra-help position to hire prospect for service coordinator position.

Aspire results show growth in reading and science.

Dr. Atcherson asked about norm-based testing versus criteria-based testing. Dr. Cobb said norm-based testing takes a group of students made up of sighted, hearing, middle-class students and form an average based on how well they do on the test. Whereas criteria-based looks at what each student of a specific grade level should be able to do based on state standards.

**23-J-034 Motion to Adjourn**

Mrs. Pack made a motion to adjourn. Motion carried.

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Susan Pack, Chair

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Dr. John McAllister, Secretary