

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 June 21, 2022, at the Arkansas School for the Deaf.

Present: Dr. Sam Atcherson, Chair; Susan Pack, Vice Chair; Robert Fagan, Secretary; James Caton, ASBVI Superintendent; Dr. Janet Dickinson, ASD Superintendent; Holley Mott, ASD Parent Representative; Will Gorum and Jonathan Smith, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community

Absent: Dr. John McAllister; Dr. Priya Gupta

Dr. Sam Atcherson called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm. The next meeting was scheduled for July 26, 2022. Dr. Atcherson stated he would be in LA giving a workshop on July 19th. Discussion on whether to change meeting date. Since there will be several action items in the July meeting, it was decided to change the date.

22-J-007 Motion to Change July Board Meeting to July 26th

Mrs. Pack made a motion to change the July meeting date from the 19th to the 26th. Mr. Fagan seconded. Motion carried.

Joint Agenda

22-J-008 Motion to Approve Joint May 2022 Minutes

Mrs. Pack made a motion to approve. Mr. Fagan seconded. Motion carried.

Action Items - None

Discussion Items – None

Dr. Atcherson said that he and the superintendents have been exploring moving to an online format for meeting minutes. There is also a communication area built in – something called BoardDocs. He invited all board members to attend a virtual tour of what is available Friday, June 24th at 9:00 am. He will send link to board members and superintendents.

There being no further business of Joint nature, the meeting moved to the ASB agenda.

ASB Agenda

22-B-006 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financials, Personnel Items)

Mr. Fagan made a motion to approve. Mrs. Pack seconded. Motion carried.

Action Items

22-B-007 Motion to Approve Blind Foreign Exchange Student (From Kyrgyzstan)

Mr. Caton said ASB has an exchange student from Kyrgyzstan which borders China. She is 17 years old. Her name is Aizirek Saipidinova. She will be in the 11th grade. April Babberl, GT teacher, is going to be her host family while she is in the US. This will be her first time in the United States. She wants to be a lawyer. ASB will be able to help her with O & M and Braille skills that she does not have access to. Dr. Atcherson asked if there was anything they should discuss about her. Mr. Caton said from what he has read there is nothing that would cause him any concerns. Mrs. Pack asked if she was in a school for the blind now. Mr. Caton said he was not sure it was a school for the blind. He said it is hard to know how they define a regular school. He said from reading through the paperwork, it seems that she is in a school where there are other blind students. Mrs. Mott asked how she got connected with Arkansas. Mr. Caton said the lady that is a representative of the exchange program said she had a history with the school. As he learned more about it, it turned out to be the Deaf School. Mrs. Pack asked if she was coming for one year. Mr. Caton said as far as he knew it was for one year. She will be in the 11th grade. Dr. Atcherson asked how many languages she knew. Mr. Caton said 5. Mr. Caton said she does not use braille.

Mr. Fagan made a motion to approve. Mrs. Pack seconded. Motion carried.

Discussion Items – None

Superintendent Report

Mr. Caton said school is out. Summer Program is now in progress. Kids are having a lot of fun. ASB is continuing to work with Region 14 on the Strategic Plan alignment. Focusing on the area of literacy which they are helping to develop. He is pleased with their assistance and resources they are providing. Will be meeting with them again soon. Jump Start had their graduation program. Mayor Scott was the guest speaker. Mr. Caton stated he was working on the annual Biennial requests for ASBVI. He will be requesting additional positions in the upcoming Biennial legislative session.

ASB Superintendent Report Continued:

Security Officer for days; Residential Supervisors for overnight; Special Education Support because of the inclusion; Reading Specialist to be a permanent position

Mrs. Pack asked what kind of support for teachers

Mr. Caton said he envisioned a position to support the teachers in learning how to carry out inclusive practices in the classroom. Mrs. Pack said at ASB not in public schools. Mr. Caton said that was correct.

Mrs. Pack asked if there was a designated supervisor for the blind in the public schools. She said recently they learned that a person had been named for deaf students in public schools. Dr. Dickinson said they would be going out to support public schools with deaf children. She said the position started a couple of months ago. She recently found out about it. Mr. Caton said he has not heard anything about that for the visually impaired. Mr. Fagan asked how this would affect the Learning Center staff. Mr. Caton said they will still be in place. It doesn't eliminate our functional programs. The reality is to count these students as graduates they will have to earn credits unless they qualify for the alternate pathway. The requirements for that are severe/strict. ASB trying to get ready to transition kids and thinks it will be 2024 that they will have to earn credits. Mrs. Pack asked if this was coming from the feds down to the state. Several said yes that is what they thought. Mr. Fagan said he thinks it is a crack and some of the kids are going to fall through. They will not be able to keep up in regular classes. He said they would benefit more from a vocational track. Mr. Caton said he agreed and felt there should be another pathway to allow these kids to graduate. He said Arkansas graduates a lot of kids on IEP's. He said ASB is in the process of planning and putting together how this will work. He said Robin Dean, IRC Assistant, is a member of the Saline County Professional Women's Lions Club. She recently won the Lion of the Year award. She is very active in the club.

Birth to Three – Shelli Hardman and Cary Smith attended Low Vision Conference at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (known nationally for their resources).

Several staff will be attending the ADE Summit this summer in Hot Springs

Mr. Williams is the Ambassador of the Summit; Barbara Cole will be attending some of the Child Nutrition sessions; Amanda Harrison will be attending some of the Special Education sessions; Erica Holmes and Phyllis Gunderman will attend the Career & Technical Education Conference at the Summit.

GT teacher, April Babberl, working to complete her Masters in GT

Katie Runder & Rebekah Burchfield working on their TVI

Mr. Williams working to get his superintendent licensure

School staying busy with summer programs

Camp Sunshine – 9; Summer Camp – 16 (Several from public schools)

Summer School is going on for credit recovery and learning loss

ASB Superintendent Report Continued:

ASB had uptick in COVID cases between graduation and start of the summer programs.

No issues since then

Infirmary – Met with Cromwell on the new building

Vicki held CPR/First Aid training

Medical records have been transferred to an electronic format

Custodial – Busy cleaning and waxing floors

IRC – Food pantry distributed 143 sacks of food between 3/17 – 5/25

There is also a summer food pantry available

IRC helped supervise some of the Jump Start students

IRC has an intern from Arkansas Public Service Internship Program

Child Nutrition – New tables have arrived for cafeteria

ASB/ASD Child Nutrition had a mix and mingle on June 2nd

Maintenance – No updates on the water/electrical projects that are supposed to take place this summer – still in conversation with Entergy on the electrical

Cottage Phase II – Scott Smith is working on the renovation plans

Roy has lined up contractors to do dormitory repairs that are needed

Staying busy mowing, weed eating, and grounds upkeep

Superintendent house has no air conditioning

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

ASD Agenda

22-D-006 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement, Personnel Items)

Mrs. Pack made a motion to approve. Mr. Fagan seconded. Motion carried.

Action Items – None

Discussion Items – None

Superintendent Report

Dr. Dickinson said her report had their new logo at the top – happy at how it turned out

Had a lot of fun with Summer Camp, a lot of exhausted staff

She asked Kevin to give a quick rundown of happenings at Summer Camp

Kevin said they had a total of 41 kids – it was a great week. They learned about drones. They had a competition. They had different engineering projects. They had ASL classes. The second week they went to Riverview and went canoeing, rafting, skiing, and zip lining. They had CODA camp. They had three new students sign up for the fall.

Dr. Dickinson thanked everyone who helped with Summer Camp.

Dr. Dickinson said they are now focusing on the retreats. She said the Admin retreat starts tomorrow; it is a two day retreat. She passed out the power points for the first day. She is still working on the one for day 2. Christy will there to train on FERPA . There is going to be a staff survey; they will go through it and develop an action plan. They are going to also focus on accreditation. The next week they will have their Educational Leadership Team retreat for two days. They will be focusing on literacy, data collection and data analysis.

She said she had a good meeting with Secretary Key and Gina Windle. James will be going next week. They have monthly meetings with Secretary Key. She presented ASD's Biennial requests. She sent to the board. Their priority is facilities. The second request was for a proposal for Statewide Services (included under separate cover). She said most all other states have a statewide based service for early childhood services that has its own funding. She said the request would be that they would offer home-based developing therapy in every region around the state. They would have at least one deaf education teacher/development therapist per region. They would also set up satellite school programs for preschool students. Their proposal follows the model proposed by New Mexico. Third request is for positions: Literacy teacher to be moved to a permanent position; Computer Science teacher and a staff language interpreter. The final request is for a school resource officer. Mrs. Pack asked if there was a way to show the comparison between have an interpreter versus hiring one. Dr. Dickinson said it seems that would be easy to do but the problem is if they hired a fulltime sign language interpreter, they would still have to hire many contract interpreters. Mrs. Pack said she thinks that is the key – to show it would save money.

Dr. Dickinson said she had lots of good news to share from the end of the school year.

Right now they are focusing on the new school year.

She asked Vicki to share where she will be next week. Vicki said she is going to Atlanta for the National Association of School Nurses conference. She said she is looking forward to things they are offering. There is going to be a lot on seizures and mental health.

Gretchen said one of the things in their Statewide proposal that she thinks is important and hopes it will give them some creditability is the JCIH Joint Commission for Infant Hearing. They have a 1-3-6 Rule. She said they try to follow that rule. She said the problem they have is they have too many kids for two teachers to go see. She said it was eye-opening to gather the data for Dr. Dickinson. The proposal is very important to them.

Mrs. Pack said you presented the Statewide Services proposal to Secretary Key and Gina. When it comes to presenting it to the committee for funding, will they let you do it or will it be done for you. Dr. Dickinson said she didn't know. Her understanding of the process is that they submit to Secretary Key, he will decide whether to approve or not, and he will take it to the governor's office. The governor's office will make the decision if it will be passed on to the legislative committee. Dr. Dickinson said when looking at numbers per region, it is important to realize that they don't know where these deaf kids are, especially school age. The only way they know to have that is because Melanie has driven school by school asking them if they have any deaf kids. Dr. Atcherson said there needs to be a conduit between ADE and ADH. There being no further business for the Arkansas School for the Deaf, the agenda moved to the Arkansas School for the Blind.

Mrs. Pack said she thought one of the greatest positions is the grant writer ASD has on staff. It has made a difference in the number of grants they have received. Dr. Dickinson said this month they got a grant for \$19,161 for the summer reading program and they also received the SOAR grant for \$33,000.

Dr. Atcherson asked for a motion to adjourn.

22-D-007 Motion to Adjourn

Mrs. Pack made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Fagan seconded. Motion carried.



Dr. Sam Atcherson, Chair



Rob Fagan, Secretary