

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 May 17, 2022 at the Arkansas School for the Blind.

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; Dr. Priya Gupta, ASBVI Parent Representative; Holley Mott, ASD Parent Representative; Will Gorum and West Porter, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community

Dr. Sam Atcherson called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm. The next meeting was scheduled for June 21, 2022 at the Arkansas School for the Deaf.

Joint Agenda

22-J-005 Motion to Approve Joint April, 2022 Minutes

Mr. Fagan made a motion to approve. Dr. McAllister seconded. Motion carried.

Action Items

Dr. Atcherson said there was an action item that did not make it on the agenda. Mr. Caton said this is an annual statement that requires board approval. He said it says that the schools are going to abide by the guidelines. He said they added an assurance for ASBVI that states Braille and large print books will be provided to students.

22-J-006 Motion to Approve Statement of Intent for IDEA Part B Funds for ASBVI & ASD

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

Discussion Items – None

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

ASD Agenda

22-D-005 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement, Personnel Items)

Mr. Fagan made a motion to approve. Dr. McAllister seconded. Motion carried.

Action Items – None

Discussion Items – None

Superintendent Report

ASD has been preparing for all the year-end events

Board always welcome to join the events, especially graduation 5/19

Thanked Mr. Caton for the use of Woolly Auditorium for ASD graduation

No A/C in Parnell Hall

Faculty that have any college degrees can wear their graduation gowns – will line up at the Leopard Spot and march to Woolly Auditorium.

Miss Grand Prairie, Karie Miller, visited ASD to have the students paint their hands and make prints on her white dress because her platform is to have ASL taught in schools.

Working with the student life program recently. Need to make changes. Meets with them without the supervisors. Felt there was lack of motivation with student life. Students are making a proposal for the fall. She is just facilitating their ideas. The students really want to become one. Dr. Dickinson will keep the board updated.

Dr. Dickinson said she was going to let Dr. Gretchen Cobb talk about Statewide Services.

Dr. Cobb stated ASD served 26 students in May – last year it was 8 students.

Several staff went to CEASD in Salt Lake City, UT. Dr. Cobb said she had never been to CEASD. She said it was an amazing weekend. She said ASD's Part C program was ahead of other states.

Dr. Cobb said after 18 months, they know every deaf baby in the state.

Dr. Dickinson stated that their enrollment includes Statewide Services

Donna said she thinks that for the last 2 years that parents have been holding their children close to home. She said they have 28 perspective new students.

Dr. Dickinson said ASD had a visitor this week. Her name is Tamara Nykaza, Literacy Specialist. She has many years of experience teaching in schools for the deaf. ASD has a strong desire to pull up reading scores for the students. This does not mean that the teachers are not doing a good job, but it means ASD wants better/stronger scores. Many programs look and feel right but she personally has not seen the outcomes increase. She said she personally saw reading scores take off at the Colorado School for the Deaf & Blind. Their literacy team is amazing. It is all based on the Literacy Specialist, Tamara Nykaza. They asked her to come to ASD. She spent the day with them and it has already been an effective experience.

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

ASB Agenda

22-B-004 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financials, Personnel Items)

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

Action Items – Addressed in the Joint Agenda

Discussion Items – None

Superintendent Report

Mr. Caton said the big thing for ASB this month was the ANCRFC funding meeting. There is never a guarantee they will fund a project. They give you 5 minutes to present your project. The Council did approve our request for \$557,450 to complete the renovations in Hill Cottage. The building houses our Birth to 3 program and the Parent Resource Center.

Still meeting with the ADE on ASB's strategic plan. He formed a team of himself, Teresa, Tyrone, Lori and Amanda to work with the Region 14 consultants on the alignment of the plan to the larger ADE plan. The team made a decided to focus on literacy as it is one of the biggest needs among the students. They have been looking at the new MAPS assessment (Measures Academic Progress through the NWEA). Have completed 2 rounds of testing that the consultants wanted them to do. It is one of the more accessible assessments out there for academic achievement for the blind and visually impaired because it removes all the visually based bias questions that is found on the state assessment. It gives ASB's students a level playing field.

Current enrollment hasn't changed but getting ready to graduate 7 students

Dr. Atcherson asked if there was a recruitment plan. Mr. Caton said students have to be referred to ASB. ASB puts out a brochure and the Child Find Ad. Mr. Fagan asked if the school gets some through the Summer Program and Jump Start. Mr. Caton said yes and also through the Low Vision Clinic.

There is a lot going on the last two weeks of school – Graduation, testing, field trips and IEP meetings.

Teacher Appreciation Week – Friends of ASB provided a pancake breakfast and also gave the teacher special bags. They also gave 3 coffee makers for teacher workrooms. The Alumni provided Kuerig coffee makers for the dorms.

The Alumni are taking the seniors to Texas Roadhouse Thursday night

The required Arkansas Civics exam was given to 22 students. All 22 passed.

ASB Superintendent Report Continued:

Several students have taken the ACT – 3 students knocked it out of the park especially with reading, and met or exceeded benchmarks for science and math.

Career Readiness Assessment

EAST night out

Spring Concert

Three teachers getting ready to start the Teacher of the Visually Impaired certification

Prom was a lot of fun – it was good to get to have again this year

Preparing for summer programs, credit recovery, Jump Start (DSB), O&M training

Special Education is changing in Arkansas. Arkansas is moving toward more inclusive practices.

Looking at how this potentially impacts our Learning Center program (kids on the IEP pathway).

This goes away after this year. Students can only graduate based on earning 22 credits.

There was lengthy discussion regarding the special education changes

Mrs. Pack said it might be good for the Board to meet with Special Ed to let them know there are concerns about communication between them and us.

Nurses Week

Health Services have been very busy (2 vaccine clinics, dental van, mandated screenings, sports physicals, health screenings, shot record letters)

Nurse Vicki attended the School Nurse Academy

Custodians getting ready to wax a lot of floors between the two campuses

Beverly, Roy and James did a walk through of all the dorms and made a comprehensive list of things needing attention and repairs

Trying to work through parent concerns addressed in last month's meeting

Working with ADE to restructure the supervision in the department where it has its own dedicated full-time supervisor instead of being split as Beverly has been doing

Mrs. Pack asked about the money received to work on the water and electric

\$4 million for the health center – an architect has been selected

\$1 million for electrical grid

\$1 million for water pipes

Mrs. Pack asked if any of it has been started.

Dr. Dickinson said no. She asked Mr. Caton if had heard anything? She said Entergy has been a complex situation because the proposal Entergy gave was not beneficial for ASD. There is a lot of work to be done in regard to that process. Mr. Caton said the Entergy part is complex and things need to be worked out. The latest update on the water from Gina is it is still being worked on. Do not have a start date yet. Mrs. Pack said there was a time limit on it. Dr.

Dickinson said it has to be completed by September, 2023. She said she had contacted ADE because she is concerned about the timeline for the Health Center. She wants to get it moving as the staff will be leaving in June.

ASB Superintendent Report Continued:

Mr. Caton said the IRC had an opportunity to be part of a grant that APH is doing
If approved, it will provide a commercial production-level braille embosser for the Wrightsville Correctional Facility

Mrs. Pack asked about whether ASB gets the text books back from public schools

Mr. Caton said generally get most of them back, some lost

ASB gets a state appropriation to use toward the cost of that program

Annual Federal Quota Census for APH completed – 119 students registered (includes several Birth to 3 students).

Child Nutrition celebrated School Lunch Hero Day

Maintenance has been very busy with the power outages recently

Mr. Caton gave dates for upcoming year-end events

Mr. Caton met with Chris Vanlandingham, Wells Fargo advisor for an annual update

He is willing to come anytime to talk to the board about the investments

Investments have held together really good, only down 2%

Mr. Fagan asked about the Easter Seals property. Mr. Caton said the building is gone.

Land is still there – Quail group did some erosion control and butterfly plantings

Mr. Fagan asked if no one wanted to buy it

Mr. Caton said not that he had hear of

Mrs. Pack said the neighborhood is very protective of the area

Mr. Fagan said the money comes in July 1st (\$30 million from governor). Is there any outline on what projects it will be spent for?

Mr. Caton said there is three broad areas they can look: Residential dorm areas; Education and Security

Mr. Fagan said are we talking new buildings or renovations

Mr. Caton said it is one sum of money for both schools – have not gotten specific in terms of how it is going to be prioritized in terms of projects

Dr. McAllister asked if it was earmarked for specific things

Mrs. Pack said she thought it was

Mr. Caton said it is for capital improvements

Dr. Dickinson said she recently asked Johnny Key what the plan was for that funding and he said they are going to have to work together to develop a plan keeping those three areas in mind that governor approved the money for. Surprised they haven't started discussions but thinks there is a big focus on finishing the Health Center on time. The \$30 million does not have an expiration date.

There being no further business for the Arkansas School for the blind, Dr. Atcherson asked for a motion to adjourn.

22-B-005 Motion to Adjourn

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



Dr. Sam Atcherson, Chair



Rob Fagan, Secretary