

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 Deaf and the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired met for their monthly meeting on November 19, 2024, at the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Present: Robert Fagan, Chair; Dr. John McAllister, Vice Chair; Cary Smith, Board Member; Philip Powell, Board Member; Jerry Belew, Board Member, and Holley Mott, ASD Parent Representative, K. Nicole Walsh, ASD Superintendent; Dr. Chris Barnes, ASBVI Interim Superintendent; Interpreters; Members of the community.

For the November student highlight, ASBVI students led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mrs. Walsh introduced the ASD robotic team. Students introduced themselves and then showed their robotics and how they work. The students said they made a robot for competition that spins, rotates and throws a ball. The team earned points for their robotics. Mr. Fagan thanked the students for bringing their work to demonstrate for the board.

The meeting was called to order at 5:06 pm.

Mr. Fagan called roll. The next meeting will be December 17, at the Arkansas School for the Deaf in the Leopard Spot (formerly the Tornado Shelter). Mr. Fagan reminded the board members of the Annual ASBA Convention December 11-13 and told them they could earn board required hours for attending.

Joint Agenda

24-J-70 Motion to Approve Joint Meeting minutes for October 22, 2024

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve. Dr. McAllister seconded. Motion carried.

Action Items: None

Discussion Items:

Report to the Public

Mrs. Walsh said in their annual report they chose to go differently than in the last few years. In years past, the annual report has just been a report. She looked at other schools for the deaf and blind to see what they provided to their public/stakeholders. She said they wanted to do something similar that represented the schools in a strong way. This report is for the 23/24 school year. She said she wasn't here during that period, so a lot of staff contributed to getting the report completed.

Report to the Public cont.

Mrs. Walsh stated that a lot of the report is data and things that had already been discussed. They took time to talk about some of the changes that have been made this year, plans they have and exciting things that are occurring. If the report is approved, it will go to print and will come out as a magazine that can be shared with other deaf schools and stakeholders. Overall, make the school look more professional. Mrs. Smith asked if this was to be completed every year. Mrs. Walsh said it is a requirement every year because they receive Title I funds. Mr. Powell said he liked how it is broken down and it helps him get a better picture of what is going on.

Dr. Barnes said he wanted to point out that it is a requirement of Title I that an annual report is completed. It provides statistics for the school, but also provides background on the testing data, finances and other pertinent information that will be available on the website. Dr. Barnes said the reports are usually done in October, but it was delayed because the Atlas scores were not released by the state until October because it was a new test which required standards to be set for assessment across the state. The state department released those statewide in October and they were able to share with families at parent-teacher conferences. Mr. Fagan asked what information other than test scores will be in this report. Dr. Barnes said in ASB's report, which is very similar to ASD's because they wanted a report that would showcase the wonderful things they did. The motto for ASB is "It's All About the Kids". He said ASB's report really projects that. Dr. Barnes said in his report you will see a letter from him that indicates things that were done in 23/24, general statistics about enrollment, percentage of low income, English language learner, gifted & talented, special education, race/ethnicity breakdown, federal funding received, district improvement plan, family engagement activities, outreach services, annual competitions, large print program, braille, adaptive tech, orientation/mobility program, as well as our outreach through the Instructional Resource Center, our health services that are provided 24 hours a day, nutritional services that provides breakfast, lunch & dinner, custodial/maintenance services, transportation services, business and IT services, occupational/physical/speech therapy services. the residential services, the summer/jumpstart programs, athletic programs, EAST program and pointed out a few things about the total Solar Eclipse (featured nationally on the weather channel). The report will be posted on the website once it is approved tonight.

24-J-71 Motion to Approve the ASB/ASD Report to the Public

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

Board Terms

Mrs. Walsh said as the end of the year is approaching, typically the board chair steps off and the vice-chair steps up to the chair position. Mr. Fagan stepped in early when Mrs. Pack stepped down. It is possible for him to continue another year as the chairman, a secretary needs to be chosen and a parent rep. Mr. Fagan said if he continues as chair, Dr. McAllister will continue as vice-chair. Mrs. Walsh said yes if the board so chooses.

24-J-72 Motion for Mr. Fagan to Remain as Chairperson & Dr. McAllister as the Vice-Chairperson for the 25-calendar year.

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve. Mr. Powell seconded. Motion carried.

Mr. Fagan said that a secretary needed to be appointed. Mr. Fagan nominated Cary Smith.

24-J-73 Motion for Cary Smith to be Board Secretary

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

ASD Agenda

24-D-74 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement, Personnel Items)

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

Action Items – None

Discussion Items –None

ASD Superintendent Report

- Enrollment - 104
- Drop in Attendance – Illnesses in School
- Corrective Action Plan with ADE-CAP nearly complete
- Training for staff to avoid this in the future
- Kids going back & forth to audiology clinic and low vision clinic
- Starting Special Ed services coming together with ASBVI
- Statewide Services working to make sure kids are getting support all the way around
- New Hires – David Burton/Security and Clayton Higgins/Interpreter
- Operations – IT Department completed a massive fiber optic project
- Counselors/Speech therapists have been collaborating/conducting social and emotional learning
- Two consistently late bus routes – working with school districts and ADE

Mrs. Smith asked if there was an update on Rasnick. Mrs. Walsh said there was not an update on time yet. The contractor interviews were held, and someone was selected but it has not been announced yet. She said they would be saying goodbye to all of the buildings relatively soon. The asbestos must be dealt with first.

Mr. Fagan asked if there were any updates on legislative bills that the board needs to be looking for. Mrs. Walsh said she did not have any information at this time. Mr. Fagan asked her to keep them posted.

ASB Agenda

24-B-75 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement, Personnel Items)

Dr. McAllister made a motion to approve. Mrs. Smith seconded. Motion carried.

Action Items - None

Discussion Items – None

ASB Superintendent Report

- Drop in attendance due to illness
- Administrative & Compliance Updates – Submitted AR App for approval-it was approved
- Worked on internal audit (ASB – 196 pages/ASD – 146 pages)
- Progress on building project – working on getting stakeholder feedback
- Alumni donated a brand-new sound system for the cafeteria
- Highlights: Had the Fall Festival, Homecoming/Red Ribbon Week, Student/Alumni Goal Ball game, King/Queen crowned, Dance, Parade (17 floats), Student of the Month
- Upcoming Events: Thanksgiving Dinner in between the Gobble & Turkey Trot (ASB/ASD jointly)

Mrs. Smith asked if ASD has a Christmas program? Mrs. Walsh said yes, and she will get the date.

Mr. Fagan announced the Alumni will be selling Christmas trees again this year.

24-B-76 Motion to Adjourn

Mr. Powell made a motion. Dr. McAllister seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 5:55 pm.

Robert Fagan, Chair

Dr. John McAllister, Vice Chair