

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 December 13, 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; Dr. Priya Gupta, ASBVI Parent Representative, Holley Mott, ASD Parent Representative, Will Gorum and Sydney Morris, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community

**Absent:** Dr. John McAllister

Dr. Sam Atcherson called the meeting to order at 5:07pm. Reminder for next meeting on January 17, 2023.

Christmas performance by the Arkansas School for the Deaf – Singing Fingers!

**Joint Agenda**

**22-J-24 Motion to Approve Joint October 2022 Minutes**

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

Dr. Atcherson began by saying, I was remiss in announcing the purpose of the executive session meeting last month (November 15, 2022). We have the freedom of Information Act, and this is a public meeting, so we are supposed to simply announce what the purpose was and whether there were any outcomes at all. So, on record the purpose of that Executive Session was to review a personnel issue at the AR School for the Deaf. We understand that there may be some different rules that apply to when an Executive Session can meet and what they can be about and so the board will be working with the Dept. of Education and maybe consulting with the Attorney General about what that means for this board.

Mrs. Pack made a motion to setup a meeting. The letter we received was not all the same information we've been told, and I know we are a school board sometimes and a state board sometimes and it's difficult to know where we fit in the picture. I do know at our school board training on numerous times particularly this last time they repeat that school board members are liable for things that occur. I don't see how that works and fits in with what was written in the letter. I am asking Christy (ADE) if we could all sit down together and discuss that.

Mrs. Pack has a motion on the floor for having the board having a training sometime early next year. Mr. Fagan seconded. Motion carried.

**Action Items – None**

**Discussion Items – None**

**ASBVI Agenda**

**22-B-025 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement, Personnel Items)**

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

**Action Items – None**

**Discussion Items – None**

**Superintendent Report**

We have left you a little Christmas token of appreciation and Christmas spirit at your table. We certainly appreciate your work with us this past year. We'll also be recognizing you next month for Board appreciation month.

The biggest thing for all of us was Welcoming Governor and Secretary Key to the Campuses. Helping us Celebrate our future new Health Center.

Ceremony and all went very well. It was a lot of fun and I think everyone enjoyed it and appreciate Chloe and ASD Staff helping us coordinate and organizing everything.

Alumni Association had a great Christmas tree sales this year. Only about 8 or 9 left of 350 trees.

On our front porch of the main building, we have one of our 12-14-foot trees, decorated and visible.

We also got another tree inside the building in the main hallway, was donated by our Alumni Assoc.

Alumni Assoc. donated live trees to each of our dormitories, as well.

Our CTE Advisory Committee met this month. We met with representatives from DSB, WSB to develop and build those partnerships with those organizations for the benefit of our students as we plan CTE goals and initiatives for the rest of this school year.

Attended a benefit dinner on December 10, at Magnolia Lodge, Albert Pike Memorial Temple on Scott Street.

Benefit dinner proceeds will be split between the two schools.

Magnolia lodge for the past several years has brought a donation by to the school so we always appreciate them and that organization thinking of us this time of year.

Previously mentioned a benefit concert by Dr. Chakraborty put on at UALR, the benefit raised for the school \$ 5,899. Proceeds will go to our Friends of ASB account to help with some needs of the school.

We appreciate Dr. Chakraborty's efforts as well of his daughters that helped with that with that to with their initiative they have started with siblings of people with exceptional abilities.

We appreciate people always thinking of the school and contributing to our needs.

Kids are looking forward to the Upcoming Christmas break.

Learning is still going on this week; a big thing is semester tests. Along with all the other Christmas Activities and celebrations at the school.

We had a junior class student that is going to be taken college algebra next semester for concurrent credit. We are starting to see this develop, our kids taking more concurrent credit and all. We end up getting points for that when they begin to tabulate our annual school report card and SS scores. We've never really gotten many points or any at all towards that because we haven't had that many kids in concurrent credit.

This junior class student is pursuing a degree in Astrophysics. She also intends to take college level physics, AP Calculus, and college level Calculus or college level Trigonometry, she is going to be very, very busy.

We are expecting two new students in January after the break. It'll be an 8<sup>th</sup> grader and a 10<sup>th</sup> grader. Both young ladies. That will add to our enrollment. This will put us at 79, so we are starting to get back closer to the 80's like we're used to. Hopefully we'll continue to grow from there.

Included on your table is our December invention newsletter. This is something new that we started. It gives our parents some different things going on at the school and ways of being involved in the instructional part of the school.

We also have a senior that offered to help tutor students after school in math. We always like when they want to be involved and help others out.

A group of students went to ASU for FBLA Training and will be participating in the spring competition. FBLA students' area of interest are cyber security, graphic design, public speaking, prompt speaking, data analysis, and sales presentation. A lot of areas that students are interested in, and we are doing our best to help them succeed in those areas.

FBLA volunteered at the AR food bank this month.

Wrestling and Cheerleading teams went to the MS School for the Blind for wrestling competition.

We appreciate ASD driving and Nurse Vicki going and ensuring our kids were taken care of health wise.

Our Cheerleaders performed the routine they will be performing in January in Louisville, Kentucky at the conference for schools for the blind for wrestling and cheerleading competitions.

We had a great family tech night out that emphasized adaptive technology and computer science. We had a good turnout for that. There was a lot of interesting things to see and explore. Mark from ADE science team was there and had a table setup, demonstrating several items.

A former alumni demonstrated the OrCam devices. They look like a pair of regular glasses that have a little camera and can let someone without any vision know what is in their surroundings and will also read documents and things like that as well. It's also able to connect to a service like On-Star. It's a national service they can just call up and they'll get a live agent that will describe to them where they're at and help them find their way or describe to them what's in the room.

It's amazing technology that is happening. We have a couple OrCam's at the school for our students to explore. We are trying to expose them to what's out there in terms of the latest technology.

Mrs. Pack asked can someone come to the meeting sometime and do a show? Mr. Caton will try to get our former Alumni; he is good at demonstrating that. I'm sure he would love to come and show you that.

Our Esports team is performing very well for the fall season. We have a student made it to the NBA2k playoffs and our Mario kart team made it to number 26 overall in the region.

Mr. Caton asked Mr. Williams if he had anything to add? Mr. Williams stated he is proud of the work the students have been doing and that's just it. Proud of their accomplishments.

We think of it as gaming but there is a lot of other things that can grow out of that in terms of what they become interested in and how they develop career wise and all.

Even with like the computer science, I had no idea there was so many ways you could teach coding to kids to get them interested in coding and programming.

8<sup>th</sup> grader, Dallas, achieved first place in the school spelling bee this month. He qualified for the Pulaski County competition later in January.

6<sup>th</sup> grader, Sandy, was the runner up for the school spelling bee.

Shared Health Services, we still got a lot of flu, strep, and little bit of Covid still happening.

Mr. Caton asked Vicki wanted to share some of things going on in Health Services? Ms. Vicki doesn't remember all the numbers of immunizations given but working on giving immunizations. Also, thank you to Children's Hospital for providing Covid vaccines and the local health department for providing flu vaccines. Just today, we have 10 covid vaccines and 5 flu vaccines.

Mr. Caton asked Ms. Vicki if we are getting ready to do another flu vaccines and she said yes.

We reported to you that for our annual December first, we were one student short, but that student did get that required shot on December 5<sup>th</sup>, so we are actually at a hundred percent now. We will be revising that on our website and that's for both schools. Both schools a hundred percent.

Campus project, currently we are working on additional doors, upgrading those with electronic access. We are waiting on some equipment to come in so we can begin to do some additional doors to make those more secure.

We are also going to move beyond that and do a larger door project that will replace doors that are worn out over the years and replacing those with doors that will be much more secure for the campus.

Upcoming activities, our biggest one is our parent dinner and Christmas concert – Thursday, Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>.

Concert will begin at 6:30pm and dinner at 5pm, if you want to come by for that.

Christmas winter break December 19<sup>th</sup> through December 30<sup>th</sup>

We'll resume classes on January 3<sup>rd</sup>.

That is my report.

Now this brings us to the final section of our agenda tonight, the AR School for the Deaf.

## **ASD Agenda**

### **22-D-026 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement, Personnel Items)**

Susan Pack made the motion to approve. Rob Fagan seconded. Motion carried.

#### **Action Items** – Proclamation Signing

Dr. Dickinson mentioned we'll have an opportunity for the Board to sign on Thursday at one o'clock in the Museum. If you are not going to be able to be here on Thursday, sign it tonight and we'll take pictures. The people who are not going to be here if you don't mind coming up and formally sign this and take pictures. Board Members and Parent Representatives signed Proclamation.

#### **Discussion Items** – None

#### **Superintendent Report**

First, I would like to celebrate our singing fingers. I really appreciate their coming back.

Gina Windle contacted us last week and asked can you perform for the state board meeting. We got that rolling. Looking at the kids we had here, I am so proud of these kids. There are two of the students who performed who got to the school with no language and you can just see what our staff has done with those kids, and I am really, proud of that.

Thank you to Kay Ann and team for that and for everybody that has worked hard, Jennifer, just to make that happen. We are getting students who have no language that they developed a dream team to work around and wrap around those students. It's really inspiring.

Today is the first time we did recognition of our library. They have done a lot of amazing things under the leadership and direction of Regina. She is amazing. She was an amazing teacher, and she has just spread her magic all over the campus. We are just really excited about that.

I asked Regina to come and share a little about the library, and we also have a short video. Video plays.

Regina said I really appreciate everything you guys have done for our library system over the past couple of years. The support from you guys has been wonderful. We've had over 350 new books added to our collection this year from June until Present. I appreciate that as a lot of our material is outdated. After the pandemic, reading scores are being affected and education worldwide has been affected. To see these kids inquire asking their little questions, wanted to learn more. Do you have a book about, or can you recommend a book. It just thrills me beyond words. Not having to force them to read for a grade, but to open a book on the joy and for me to share that joy with these kids is just life changing for me. I thank you very much for all that you've done, and all your support and I can't wait to do more.

Regina said every year books-a-million support us and each student gets two or more free books.

Mrs. Pack asked about the Dolly Parton Imagination Library? Have you connected at all with that?

Regina responded I have not. I have talked to Gretchen, Outreach, about setting something up. The parents must sign up and it must be through the county in which they live and because of our students all over the states I don't know they would work with us with that. It is in my long list of to-dos.

Regina asked everyone to thank Ms. Pack, she hired me in 1989 and put me in the dormitory.

Dr. Dickinson said I heard recently that Regina had provided training for all of our dorm staff on how to sign stories and how to incorporate that in the dormitories.

Mr. Caton has already mentioned our groundbreaking.

We are so proud of Levi, our student body president. He did a beautiful job. So that was very nice.

We had a partnership with blind school, and we were able to come together to make that happen.

After the Ceremony, we had our Christmas tree lighting celebration, that was a lot of fun. It rained buckets, so we had to move that indoors.

I was at the capital two weeks ago when we were counting down the lighting of the tree, what happened when they got to zero, nothing. I had that flash back of Christmas tree lighting. We were counting down and was like please let it work. Thank you so much Roy, you did a good job with that.

Eddie, Mary Martha, Gretchen, and I went over to Batesville to meet with Lion College. We had a wonderful meeting with leadership of the Department of Education, President, and the provost.

We are working on developing the deaf education certification program. It looks like that is coming along well, going to submit syllabi. Everything just seems to be working out beautifully.

For the Deaf Education Certification Program, you would have a bachelor's degree and probably have license in education teaching and then you would be able to pick up a second license for deaf education.

We had a discussion yesterday, brainstorming ideas, if we would be able to add in an educational interpreting type of program. We already have people interpreting but add this educational interpreting classes. We also talked about you not for credit classes for paraprofessionals. There's a lot we can do with that. We are very excited about that partnership with Lion college.

Also, we were sad to announce that Tommy Walker has passed away. We are heartbroken. Tommy was on the board here for ASB/ASD for 10 years I believe. A precious and strong supporter of the school. We are thinking about his family.

On Thursday, if you have nothing to do on December 15<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Caton and I keeping people busy from morning to night.

Thursday morning at 10 o'clock lower school will be performing in Parnell Hall followed by Christmas lunch.

Open house from 11a to 2p.

One o'clock will be your moment to shine, official signing of the Proclamation in the ASD Museum. We have decorated that it is beautiful, the museum volunteers are thrilled.

1:30p Middle School and High School will be performing

5pm: ASBVI Christmas dinner

6:30p ASBVI Concert performance

You will be exhausted when you are done.

I think that's it. There is a lot more information in the report. A lot of stuff that is going on we are proud of that is happening. We are also looking forward to the holidays. Thank you so much

Mrs. Pack feels as a board that we should do something for Tommy Walker. The service is not until the 5<sup>th</sup> of January. We can think about it and come up with an idea. Tommy walker was the voice of the deaf community when I first started, a very valued voice. He was a jewel. If you all have ideas just let me know but I would like as a board to do something for the family.

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**22-J-028 Motion to Adjourn**

Ms. Pack made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Fagan Seconded. Motion carried

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Dr. Sam Atcherson, Chair

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Rob Fagan, Secretary