

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 20, 2023, at the Arkansas School for the Deaf.

**Present:** Susan Pack, Chair; Robert Fagan, Vice Chair; Dr. John McAllister, Secretary; Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Board Member; Philip Garner, Board Member; James Caton, ASBVI Superintendent; Dr. Gretchen Cobb, ASD Interim 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:**

Mrs. Pack called the meeting to order at 5:00pm. The July board will take place on July 18, 2023, at the Arkansas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired.

**ASD Staff and Community Members**

ASD staff member expressed his concerns for a deaf Superintendent and made recommendations for the utilization of Innivee Strategies on the search for Superintendent. Additionally, A deaf community member offered feedback on involvement of the deaf community in future board meetings, including date, time, and location. Request for meeting notice by social media or community networking.

Mrs. Pack informed all attendees that board meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month at 5:00pm and rotate between ASD and ASBVI campus. Changes will be reflected on the website.

**Joint Agenda**

**23-J-021 Motion to Approve Joint and Special Meeting May 2023 Minutes**

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

**Action Items**

**Review of Plans for the Health Services Building**

Secretary Oliva previously met with Superintendents and additional staff from both schools to review the revised plans. A comprehensive plan has been established that can now be taken to the Architects and dollars allocated to support the building of this plan once it receives full board approval.

Dr. Atcherson made a motion to approve. Dr. McAllister seconded. Motion Carried.

## Discussion Items

### Budget and Staffing Information

Secretary Oliva briefly reviewed the 2022-23 school year and the upcoming 2023-24 school year budget. A general rule of thumb is that about 80% of operating funds go towards staffing salaries and other staff expenses each year. The proposed budget for ASBVI is around 80.87% for staff. The budget for ASD is around 85% for staff salaries. These budget charts are aggregated at a high level. Overall dollar allocations at ASBVI, the average expenditures are approximately 7.5 million and ASD is approximately 11.4 million, this breaks down to a little over a hundred-thousand dollars for education per student at each school. The average allocation per student in Arkansas at a non-residential school that excludes specialized services is around twelve thousand per student. Secretary Oliva believes the state makes a great investment in both schools but feels there is room to ask questions. Are funds being allocated to the programs that we want to see the greatest return on investment for our students. Moving forward, Secretary Oliva encourages finding opportunities to be more efficient and prioritize campus projects and safety measures.

Dr. McAllister asked about the discrepancy between the school's allocations. Secretary Oliva and Mrs. Pack stated that is due to the difference in the number of personnel and staff at each school.

Mrs. Pack stated that as a board, there is a big responsibility to ensure the money spent is spent wisely. Mrs. Pack clarified with Secretary Oliva that the board can have a say in how the money is spent. Moving forward, the board and ADE work together to make sure that money is spent wisely.

Secretary Oliva asked that the Board give the Superintendents authority to make decisions, give feedback, and to update the board. Mrs. Pack believes that is the Superintendent's job. The Superintendents alongside their administrative staff to make decisions and advise the board. Board agreed.

## **ASBVI Agenda**

### **23-B-022 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement, Personnel Items)**

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

**Action Items** – None

## Discussion Items

### Wells Fargo Investment Review

Met with Wells Fargo investment advisor for yearly review of investment account. Currently doing what it's supposed to do based on conservative perimeters with moderate risk. Current yearly income average at 4.6 percent. Looking at reducing some equity exposure by selling smaller spin-off companies

and replacing. Selling lower quality preferred stocks and getting higher quality preferred stocks and taking advantage of short-term and intermediate interest rates bonds are starting to get. Has an accumulative return of 34.47 percent since 2013.

### **ASBVI Budget**

Provided a comparison between what the school has been operating on and what the school is looking at for the coming year. Mr. Caton plans to establish a more user-friendly monthly budget spreadsheet that breakdowns expenditures month to month for the board.

### **Superintendent Report**

Public Service intern – R. Ware from the State’s Public Service Program

Upcoming conferences

Samantha, Tyrone, and Lori attended Atlas Assessment Training at Arch Ford

Met with Cromwell on Health Services Building

Met with Roy and ASD Supt to begin planning campus projects.

Looking at campuses assessments done in 2021

Working with position cap at 91. 85 positions filled. Requests submitted to fill 4 of 6.

Great summer programs – kids having a lot of fun.

Three camps – camp sunshine, summer camp, and cheer camp. 51 kids, 15 from public schools

Jumpstart ended last week. Summer jobs program in collaboration with DSB. 17 students

UALR orientation mobility program. 5 summer interns that are O&M candidates at UALR

Campus projects are going well.

Water line project, testing finished, tie in line and pave back drive soon

August 7 staff returns

August 14 staff returns

## **ASD Agenda**

### **23-D-023 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement, Personnel Items)**

Dr. McAllister made a motion to approve. Dr. Atcherson seconded. Motion Carried.

**Action Items** – None

### **Discussion Items**

#### **ASD Superintendent Search Options**

The position announcement submitted has been approved. The position advertisement will be posted once the position is unfrozen. There are several ways to search for a new Superintendent, one being Innivee. Mrs. Pack spoke with Innivee and received their five phase steps. They match candidates both hearing and deaf. The cost of using Innivee is fifty thousand. The second option is with region 14 who has a contract with ADE. A member of region 14 would come to Arkansas and work with the board and

Board of Trustees Meeting

Arkansas School for the Blind

Arkansas School for the Deaf

Page 3

June 20, 2023

established committee for moving forward. It would be at no cost. Secretary Oliva informed the board that AR has procurement laws, so state dollars spent over twenty thousand dollars must be competitively bid. This could extend the search process by many months. Board members expressed their concerns and the positive benefits of utilizing their services.

Mr. Fagan made a motion to Invite Region 14 to Arkansas. Dr. McAllister seconded. Motion Carried.

For the Superintendent search a committee must be established of approximately 14 members. A sign-up sheet was previously passed around ASD and several asked to be considered. Mrs. Pack read aloud the names of those signed up. Dr. Atcherson asked about the process going forward for selecting a committee. Mrs. Pack asked that all committee establishment information be directed to ASD Superintendent Assistant. Mrs. Mott asked about the time commitment of the committee. Based on experience, Mrs. Pack stated the committee could meet three to four times.

Dr. Atcherson asked about protecting confidentiality of the candidates. ADE Legal representative stated that the board can go into special session when deliberating the appointment between three candidates. Legal representative stated the committee by itself can meet in a private session, but meeting involving more than two board members must be done in a public forum.

### **Superintendent Report**

Dr. Cobb thanked the board, ADE and ASD staff for support, guidance, and team work  
Environmental services getting ready to wax, shampoo, strip floors, move furniture  
Lower school finished Aspire testing  
Teachers going to Atlas Training  
Pushing the Atlas system to use the pop-up interpreter  
Did well with Aspire this year  
High school been busy with sport banquet, prom, graduation  
Update camp count next month  
Leopard care closest  
Move some help to State-wide services for our 0-3 for summer time  
Middle worked with region 14 this last year, looking at student reading level.  
Seven positions available: four teachers, dorm supervisor, Resident advisor, and a cook  
ASD Ready for Learning plan update

**23-J-024 Motion to Adjourn**

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

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Susan Pack, Chair

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Dr. John McAllister, Secretary