

OFFICIAL MINUTES FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING OF THE
ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

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 December 17, 2024, at the Arkansas School for the Deaf.

Present: Robert Fagan, Chair; Dr. John McAllister, Vice Chair; Cary Smith, Board Member (Zoom); 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 December student highlight, ASBVI students led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Dr. Barnes said he would introduce the students that are going to be performing (waiting on one student).

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm.

Mr. Fagan called roll. The next meeting will be January 21, 2025, at the Arkansas School for the Blind. Mrs. Walsh asked if the members would be available for a workshop that day. She said they have some exciting news that she would like them to hear from the architects directly. It was decided to start at 1:00.

Joint Agenda

24-J-77 Motion to Approve Joint Meeting minutes for November 19, 2024

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

Action Items: None

Discussion Items:

Board Meeting Location

Mrs. Walsh said for safety purposes, fencing is going up around campus. Passage into the School for the Blind will become more difficult. To make it safe for the students, she would propose that the board meetings be moved to the Tornado Shelter on a permanent basis, especially since construction will be happening, it would allow for a consistent space. Mr. Fagan said the only concern he has is that when they go into executive session, the audience would have to be outside in the elements. Dr. McAllister said he had the same concern. Mr. Fagan suggested using Woolly Auditorium. The foyer could be utilized for people to wait in if an executive session were necessary. Mrs. Walsh said she thought it was a good idea. The board agreed to have the January meeting in the auditorium to see how it goes. Mr. Fagan said it would keep parking in front of the building and security is close also. Mr. Fagan asked for a motion.

24-J-78 Motion to hold board meetings in Woolly Auditorium

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

ASB Agenda

Mr. Fagan asked if the students were ready. Mr. Fagan turned the meeting over to Dr. Barnes. Dr. Barnes said ASBVI students were here to perform Christmas music. He introduced the students and Mr. Algis Staskevicius, the Instrumental Music teacher. The students played three Christmas songs.

24-B-79 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement, Personnel Items)

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

Dr. McAllister asked about the nursing situation. Why are they leaving? Mrs. Walsh said there was discontent in the nursing station, and they chose to find other positions. She said the concerns are being addressed. The positions have been approved and should be posted very soon. Currently we have contract staff that are helping in the Infirmary.

Action Items – None

Discussion Items – None

ASB Superintendent Report

- It has been a festive time at ASBVI
- Enrollment – 62 Two new students in January
- First annual ASB/ASD Gobble Wobble/Turkey Trot
- Wrestling & Cheer teams competed in Tennessee. One student won their match & one came in 2nd place
- Cookies for Santa for Birth to Three student December 7th
- Students of the month for Elementary & Secondary
- Career Service Recognition- 3 employees with 20 years & 1 employee with 10 years
- Upcoming events: Christmas Performance, family dinner on the 19th, Spelling Bee 12/9
- Several open positions - Mrs. Cole has been interviewing
- Currently have 3 paraprofessionals who are in the final stage of completing their state approved teaching program to be fully licensed teachers
- Building Projects – Working with architect team on several various projects
- Received a \$10,000 donation for a memorial to be used for assistive technology & safety equipment on campus
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- Dr. Barnes gave out the Christmas gift to the Board Members

ASD Agenda

24-D-80 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement, Personnel Items)

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

Action Items – None

Discussion Items –None

ASD Superintendent Report

- Enrollment holding steady
- Attendance Influenced by illness for Students & Staff – Flu/Covid/Strep
- Students have access to online learning when not here
- Lower School – Focusing on Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)
- Staffing changes planned to better support students in January
- MS/High School – One student signed with ASU Three Rivers to play baseball
- Significant decrease in student behavior incidents compared to last year - Contribute it to the no phone policy in place
- Staff have been participating professional development
- Special Services: Served a ton of meals in October & November
- CAP- Policy & Procedures have been cleared
- One hospital homebound student being supported
- Hired Donna Shields/Had resignations
- Recognized educational staff for exemplary models
- Career Service Recognitions
- Progress on fencing project
- ASD collected \$4300 in November for student special events
- ASD has seen a high level of interest/support for their Angel Tree Campaign
- Mrs. Walsh handed out Christmas gifts to the Board members

There being no further business, Mr. Fagan asked for a motion to adjourn.

24-D-81 Motion to Adjourn

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

Robert Fagan, Chair

Cary Smith, Secretary