



# Arkansas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired

2600 W. Markham · Little Rock, Arkansas · 72205 · (501) 296-1810 · Fax (501) 296-1831

Jacob Oliva  
Secretary of Education

Dr. Chris Barnes  
Interim Superintendent



## Board of Trustees Superintendent Report October 2024

### Dr. Chris Barnes, Interim Superintendent

This month, Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ASBVI) has been focused on student learning amidst many extracurricular activities. Below are some major points showcasing **ASBVI PRIDE** for the current month:

#### Academics

- We have received results from the Arkansas ATLAS assessment and are disaggregating those data currently. We will share an update on those and the NWEA Fall results at the board workshop on October 22.
- The focus of classroom walkthroughs remains on the implementation of high quality instructional practices and student engagement. For reading, ASBVI has implemented Benchmark Reading in Grades K-6 and StudySync in Grades 7-12 for its High Quality Instructional Material (HQIM). For math, ASBVI has implemented Envision Math in Grades K-12 for its HQIM. There is a need to review these curricula to determine the extent to which they are adaptable for blind and visually-impaired students.

#### Student Support

- The ASBVI Track Team had a wonderful showing at the North Central Association of Schools for the Blind (NCASB) Track and Field Conference in Ohio. The girls team won the NCASB championship, and the boys placed third. Congratulations to those teams!
- Infirmary Review with ADE DESE School Nursing Unit. Nurse Vicki Crump has been working with Cheria McDonald at the ADE DESE School Nursing unit to conduct a comprehensive review of the health services program. The review includes protocols for distributing medication, training processes, and procedures for the development of student individualized health plans and personal care



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plans. We hope to receive a report very soon on recommendations for improving health services.

## Human Capital

- ASBVI has worked with ASD to hire a campus security director and a facilities director. The campus security director oversees the entire safety and security system across both campuses, including safety prevention procedures and processes and the supervision of safety contractors. The facilities director manages and oversees the maintenance, repair, upkeep, and quality of facilities in providing services to students.
- ASBVI is also conducting interviews for a school principal and a director of state reporting. The school principal position will serve as the instructional leader for student programming in grades K-12. The director of state reporting will coordinate efforts for state cycle reporting and ensure the accuracy of data reflected in eschool and standards for accreditation systems for both ASBVI and ASD.
- ASBVI is still attempting to recruit quality personnel for instructional positions. Position vacancies needing filled are as follows:
  - Gifted and Talented Coordinator (shared with ASD)
  - 7-12 Science Teacher
  - Family and Consumer Science Teacher
  - Instructional Paraprofessional
  - Statewide Support Specialist/Teacher

## Fiscal Governance

- ESSER III funds were utilized to purchase a high-speed embosser that will assist teachers in printing Braille formats quickly and efficiently. The district also utilized its 1003 School Improvement funds to support supplemental instruction in reading and math.
- ASBVI has implemented the Procurement Express system (a.k.a. Rubberstamp) to streamline the process for approving purchases and reviewing spending.

## Facilities, Transportation, and School Safety



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- SMC and Mackey Mitchell Architects have been working to flesh out an initial design that incorporates the stakeholder feedback. The team hopes to share a working draft with the board and other stakeholders soon.
- David Burton, the Director of Campus Security, has been involved in forming a joint safety team to review safety protocols and emergency preparedness procedures. Mr. Burton has been present on the ASBVI campus to help evaluate the execution of the emergency evacuation plans for fire and tornado, and we have begun to make adjustments to processes in order to ensure better safety and communication during an emergency. Mr. Burton has also worked with his team to secure the perimeter of the campus and remove potential threats to security, including the dismantling of a homeless camp at the back edge of the ASBVI campus. Mr. Burton is working with the technology team to procure and implement high quality cameras on the campus in order to enhance security.
- The ASBVI west wing reported suspicious microbial growth in rooms and the hallways. Arkansas Mold and Water (AMW) collected a wall sample of the growth and tested the air quality. The results indicated that the air quality was within normal limits and the growth was not mold. AMW cleaned the area using a detergent, and we changed the filters to better improve the air quality and prevent future microbial growth from occurring.

## **Community & Stakeholder Partnerships**

- The Hindustani Music Concert on Friday, October 4th, was a memorable event. The concert took place in Woolly Auditorium with a reception from 5-6 PM and the concert itself from 6:30-9:00 PM. Dr. Indranil Chakraborty expressed his gratitude to everyone involved, especially highlighting the efforts of Dr. Chris Barnes, Ms. Nicole Walsh, Ms. Barbara Cole, Mr. William Harrison, and Mr. David Burton to ensure the venue was ready. The event was well-received by the Little Rock community, who appreciated the high-quality performance and the excellent hospitality provided by the ASBVI Team. As a result, the event raised over \$1700 for ASBVI. Overall, the concert was a great success, thanks to the collaborative efforts of everyone involved.
- The "Fall in Love with Literacy" Night was held on Thursday, October 10th, from 5 PM to 7 PM. The evening was filled with engaging literacy activities, snacks, and drinks, all provided free of charge to students and patrons. The overwhelming participation from parents and students made the night even more



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engaging and valuable to the community. The dedication and hard work of the teachers and staff, particularly Joe Reynolds and Katie Runder, who gave their time and energy in planning and executing the activities, were crucial to the event's success.

- ASBVI and ASD worked together with the ADE Office of Special Education (OSE) and the Office of Innovation in Education at the University of Arkansas to conduct a landscape mapping of statewide services provided to blind/visually-impaired and deaf/hard-of-hearing individuals across the continuum of life. The initial meeting included members from ASBVI, ASD, OSE, ESVI, and EARS and focused on coming together to form a common vision of what statewide services should provide. The team comprised that common vision and discussed avenues for promoting the vision and minimizing barriers. The team decided to meet regularly in the beginning in order to capitalize on the positive momentum of support.

## **Transition Activities with ASD**

- The instructional leadership team has been working to develop a common vision, including the collaboration of both campuses to support activities around the implementation of that vision. The last professional development day showcased the work of the instructional leadership team to conduct a session on growth mindset, where both ASBVI and ASD personnel worked together to present. This is the first time in which both schools have come together to present and participate in professional development.

## **Upcoming Activities:**

- November 4-8—ASBVI Homecoming (activity days to merge with Red Ribbon Week)
- November 5—Homecoming Dance
- November 7—Alumni Goalball Game (6:00pm-8:00pm)
- November 8—Homecoming Parade (10:00am)
- November 11-15—NWEA Testing, Winter Administration
- November 19—Braille Bootcamp (5:30pm-7:00pm)
- November 21—ASBVI Thanksgiving Lunch and Annual Turkey Trot (1:15pm)