



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 December 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:

ASBVI Enrollment: 62 students

There is currently one student being considered for referral.

Highlights and Activities

1. ASBVI/ASD Gobble Wobble and Turkey Trot: On Thursday, November 21, ASBVI and ASD joined forces to conduct our first annual joint Gobble Wobble and Turkey Trot on the football field at ASD. This two-part event, which was coordinated around our traditional Thanksgiving meal, provided participants with physical activity while incorporating several elements of the expanded core curriculum (Compensatory Skills, Orientation & Mobility, Recreation & Leisure, Self-Determination, Sensory Efficiency, and Social Interaction Skills). Parents were able to watch students participate in the events as well as join their student for lunch. We served lunch to approximately 50 parents. A special thanks to our Joint Gobble Wobble/Turkey Trot Committee (Haley Beaver, Debbie Chambers, Lori Cole, LaHollis Hill, Rhonda Read, Brian Tanner, and KaAnn Varner) as well as Mrs. Barbara Cole and the ASBVI Food Service Team who prepared a fantastic meal.
2. The ASBVI Wrestling and Cheer Teams competed in the Frank Alexander Invitational on December 6-8. Our teams worked hard, learned a lot, and the future looks bright for them. Luna Hudson won her first wrestling match. Also, our cheer team is coming together, and they are hoping to successfully defend their national title at the NCASB Conference in January.



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3. ASBVI held its annual Cookies with Santa event for our Birth-Pre-K students on Saturday, December 7. Approximately ten families of our Birth-to-Three Program and Pre-K Program participated in the event, where they decorated cookies, created ornaments and artwork, and got to meet with Santa. Cookies with Santa is a great outreach opportunity, allowing parents of blind and visually impaired children who are younger than five to connect with other parents of blind and visually impaired children.
4. ASBVI Students competed in the “Hour of Code” event through Code.org on Tuesday, December 10, in recognition of National Computer Science Education Week.
5. Students of the Month: We are excited to highlight our students of the month
 - November
 - Elementary: Trinity Davis
 - Secondary: Lucas Harris
 - Lucas Harris is also the recipient of the Daughters of the American Revolution Award.
6. Career Service Recognition for 2024:
 - Lori Cole–20 years
 - Shawn Galmore–20 years
 - William Harrison–20 years
 - Brian Tanner–10 years
7. Upcoming Events
 - Annual Christmas Performance and Family Christmas Dinner: Thursday, December 19
 - Christmas Break: ASBVI will observe Christmas Break from December 21 through January 6.
 - ASBVI Spelling Bee: Thursday, January 9, at 1:00pm in Woolly Auditorium
 - NCASB Wrestling and Cheer Conference Competition: January 24-26 at Tennessee School for the Blind in Nashville, TN.
 - NWEA Winter Testing: January 29-February 2



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Human Capital Updates

ASBVI continues to struggle with filling vacant positions. The following positions are currently open and advertised:

- Teacher Supervisor
- Teacher–Special Education
- Teacher–Gifted and Talented (shared with ASD)
- Teacher–Pre-K/Elementary
- Teacher–Science 7-12

There are currently three paraprofessionals who are at the final stage of completing a state-approved teacher preparation program in order to become fully licensed teachers. ASBVI is working with ADE DESE to secure Aspiring Teacher permits for these staff members upon their successful completion of the teacher licensure assessments. Staff members with an Aspiring Teacher permit are able to complete their teaching internship while serving as a teacher of record.

Building Project Developments

The architect team met with teachers, staff, and school leadership focus groups in early December to receive feedback on design considerations for spaces in the new construction. The groups explored different spacing layouts and provided input on how such layouts would best support them with providing services to our students. The architect team will incorporate these considerations into the overall design.

Outside Donation to ASBVI

ASBVI received a \$10,000 donation from the J. Norman Young Donor Advisor Fund through the Raymond James Charitable Fund. The gift was provided in honor of Dr. Doug Holloway, who provided ongoing support for Dr. Scott Young, the son of Dr. J Norman Young. The family dedicated these funds to be used to support purchases of assistive technologies and/or safety equipment on campus.