

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 January 21, 2025, at the Arkansas School for the Deaf.

Present: Robert Fagan, Chair; Dr. John McAllister, Vice Chair; Cary Smith, Board Member; 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.

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm. Mr. Fagan said this is a temporary location for the board meetings until the new facility is built. There will be a multi-Purpose room/Board room that will be utilized in the new facility.

Mr. Fagan asked Dr. Barnes to introduce the ASBVI student that led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Fagan called roll and all members were present. The next meeting will be February 18, 2025, in Woolly Auditorium on the ASBVI campus.

Joint Agenda

25-J-01 Motion to Approve Joint Meeting December 17, 2024, Minutes

Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve. Dr. McAllister seconded. Motion carried.

Action Items:

Board Stipend Approval: 25-J-02 Motion to Approve Board Stipend

Mr. Powell made a motion to approve of keeping it as is. Dr. McAllister seconded. Motion carried.

Superintendent Residency Letter: 25-J-03 Motion to Approve Superintendent Residency Letter

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

Employment Resolution Letter: 25-J-04 Motion to Approve the Employment Resolution Letter

Mr. Powell made a motion to approve. Mr. Belew seconded. Motion carried.

Discussion Items:

Board Training Hours:

Mr. Fagan stated 6 hours are required yearly. Arkansas School Board Association gives plenty of access to online training and he recommended that members attend the ASBA Conference in December. He and Mrs. Smith attended this past December and received a lot out of it. He said you get to meet superintendents and school board members from all over the state. He said he encouraged the superintendents to attend this year. He said in February ASBA will have a board training for Arkansas Law Update. He asked Dr. Barnes to read the training hours for the board members. Dr. Barnes stated Mrs. Cary Smith -21 hours; Mr. Fagan – 21 hours; Mrs. Mott - 12 hours; Mr. Belew - 0 hours; Dr. McAllister – 1 hour; and Mr. Powell – 3 hours. Mr. Fagan said he recommended that they register for the Law Seminar. You can attend in person or virtually. See Betty or Tiffany to get registered.

Legislative Updates:

Mrs. Walsh said they were hoping to have the schools' bill filed for the merger and for changes to the language, but it has not been filed yet. She said they were also waiting on a couple of other things relating to school calendars. There have been quite a few things filed for public schools, some of them apply to our schools and some do not. She encouraged the members to go on the website and check. As soon as the schools' bill gets filed, she will let them know. She will have Tiffany send it directly so they can look at it.

Mr. Fagan said that concluded the Joint agenda.

ASD Agenda

25-D-05 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement, Personnel Items)

Dr. McAllister made a motion to approve. Mrs. Smith seconded. Motion carried.

Action Items - None

Discussion Items – None

ASD Superintendent Report

- Held the first joint staff Merry “Dip-mas” party just before Christmas break
- ASD held an Ugly Sweater contest – David Burton won this year
- Thanked Tiffany for all her work getting donations for prizes for the party
- Implemented Critical Alert Document (CAD) which kept staff updated and informed
- Corrective Action Plan Documents submitted to ADE to clear monitoring that began in 2024
- Asbestos Abatement is complete for Warfield/CTE Building

- Abatement has started on the Lower School/Parks Building
- Additional Stakeholder meetings held in January to focus on specialty areas (dining, therapy, security, and the media center)
- Children First Daycare was set to move out on 1/24 but has changed to 2/14/25
- Geotechnical Borings occurred during the winter break – still awaiting results
- Transportation Coordinator position has been offered but not yet started
- Ms. Doan, Dr. Barnes & Mrs. Walsh have held several interviews for LPNs & RN's
- Will be interviewing for the Nursing Supervisor position soon
- Teacher Positions: Art and Science have been posted – interviews will be soon
- Governor Sanders speech mentioned several topics that do relate to our schools
 - Education Freedom Accounts-Universal access to education vouchers for students and their families in Arkansas
 - Cell phones in School Ban for statewide ban
 - Funding for college credits while in high school
 - Universal Free School Breakfast

Mr. Fagan said he heard that Prewitt Hall had some heating problems, and that Mrs. Walsh and family helped the staff make the move to a dorm so the students could be warm. He said she jumps right in when there is a problem. He thanked her.

Mr. Fagan asked Mrs. Walsh to read Governor Sanders' "School Board Member Recognition Month in Arkansas" Proclamation.

ASB Agenda

25-B-06 Motion to Approve Consent Items (Minutes, Financial Statement, Personnel Items)

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

Discussion Items – None

Action Items –None

ASB Superintendent Report

- ASBVI Enrollment – 64 Students
- Two new 4th grade students and may have a new Pre-K student coming
- ASBVI held its Merry Grinchmas party
- ASBVI had the annual Christmas Music program and parent dinner
- Several staff members coordinated Angel Tree Military Card Program
- Inclement weather took several days out of schedule
- Staff stayed to make sure buildings were in good order before the snow came

- Mr. DePriest & staff were responsible for clearing snow from sidewalks & parking; Gary Wade & the transportation team made sure everything was coordinated with Village Travel and surrounding districts; David Burton & his security team stayed overnight to make sure campus was secure
- Spelling Bee conducted on January 16th
- NCASB Cheerleading and Wrestling conference happening this weekend
- NWEA testing next week
- High school FBLA Conference January 29th in Conway
- Regional Braille Challenge and Cane Quest on February 6th
- Still looking for a Teacher Supervisor, Special Education Teacher, GT Teacher (to be shared with ASD), 7-12 Science Teacher (for ASB/ASD)
- Hired Josie Hall, an alumna of ASB, to work in the Pre-K program. She graduated from Harding University
- Staffing for the Infirmary is approaching critical mass with several resignations and are trying to fill those positions. Mrs. Doan has stepped in to support the efforts/stability with the loss of staff members. Contract services to help continue service.
- The architect team met with specialty teachers, therapists, cafeteria manager, and security team to gather feedback on design considerations for the new construction project
- Parent Square is now activated on campus
- The 95th General Assembly has commenced
- January is National School Board Appreciation Month

Mr. Fagan asked if there were any questions. Mrs. Smith asked if updated from the Cheerleading/Wrestling competition could be shared. Dr. Barnes said he would share on Parent Square. Mrs. Mott asked if the board could be added to Parent Square. Dr. Barnes said he thought the board could be added as a group

Mr. Fagan asked for a motion to adjourn.

25-B-07 Motion to Adjourn

Mrs. Smith made a motion. Mr. Powell seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 5:46pm.

Robert Fagan, Chair

Cary Smith, Secretary