



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 February 2025

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: 66 students

We enrolled two new students.

PreKindergarten-Grade 6 = 33 students

Grade 7-Grade 12 = 33 students

Attendance has been impacted by several illnesses including flu, COVID, and RSV.

Highlights and Activities

1. NCASB Wrestling and Cheer Conference Tournament: The ASBVI Wrestling and Cheer teams competed at the North Central Association of Schools for the Blind Conference Tournament on January 24-26 at the Tennessee School for the Blind in Nashville. Both groups worked really hard to provide a strong showing for ASBVI. In wrestling, Zy Morris received 1st place in his division, and several students experienced their first wins of the season. The cheer team also excelled, capturing a 3rd place victory overall. Both teams have learned a lot this season and are excited to continue progressing to be even better next year. Special thanks to coaches, Brian Tanner, Levi Ryals, and Katie Runder for their leadership and dedication to our teams, as well as the many volunteers who supported the teams. Congratulations to everyone who participated!
2. Arkansas Blind and Low Vision Competition Day: ASBVI hosted the state blind and low vision competition day on Thursday, February 6. This full-day



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tournament featured blind and visually impaired students from across the state competing in specialized events including the Braille Challenge, Cane Quest, and Abacus Bee.

Braille Challenge Winners

Varsity: Bryson Selby (1st); London Ledbetter (2nd)

Junior Varsity: Addy Lemons (1st); Sandy Mews (2nd)

Sophomore: Harper Swank (1st); Khloe Stracener (2nd)

Freshman: Shaylah Richardson (1st); Griffin Smith (2nd)

Apprentice: Jensen Fultz (1st)

Foundational: Christina Eason (1st)

Cane Quest Top Winners

Dallas Cathey, Hannah Hill, Jace Hutchison

Abacus Bee Winners

Grades 1-4: Dillon Warren

Grades 5-6: Travis Taylor

Grades 7-8: Brian Dukes

Grades 9-10: Dallas Cathey

Grades 11-12: Lucas Harris

All of the ASBVI staff pulled together to support the competition as well as helped provide parents with guidance and information about ways they can support their children.

3. ASBVI was proud to nominate two rising senior students (Evan Pratt and Bryson Selby) for consideration to attend the Arkansas Governor's School on the Arkansas Tech University campus in Russellville this summer. The Arkansas Governor's School is a four-week summer residential program for gifted and talented students who are upcoming high school seniors and residents of the state of Arkansas. The program is funded by the Arkansas State Legislature as a portion of the biennial appropriation for Gifted and Talented Programs through the State Department of Education. Selected students are provided with full



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tuition, room, board, and instructional materials to access the full program.

Students are selected on the basis of their special aptitudes in one of eight fields: Choral Music, Drama, English/Language Arts, Instrumental Music, Mathematics, Natural Science, Social Science, or Visual Arts. All students also take classes in General Conceptual Development and in Personal and Social Development. Selections will be finalized in March.

4. January Students of the Month: Dylan Gooding (Elementary) and ZyTaveon Morris (Secondary)

5. Staff Shout-Out: Ms. Tammy Harrison (Grade 1/2 Teacher). Ms. Harrison is relatively new to the faculty at ASBVI, but her dedication to her students and to the school has not gone unnoticed. Since her arrival at ASBVI, Ms. Harrison has demonstrated growth for all of her students in NWEA and has worked to implement innovative after school programming through a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) Club, where she is engaging students in VEX robotics. Ms. Harrison is dedicated to supporting her students and exhibits lots of energy and enthusiasm.

6. Upcoming Events
 - Black History Month Assembly: Wednesday, February 26 @ 1:30pm in Woolly Auditorium
 - Arts Advocacy Day for Grades 3-6: Monday, March 10, at the State Capitol Building
 - ASBVI Annual Talent Show: Thursday, March 13 @ 6:00pm in Woolly Auditorium
 - Parent Teacher Conferences: Friday, March 21 (In person and virtual)

Human Capital Updates

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

- Teacher–Special Education (no qualified applicants currently)



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- Teacher–Gifted and Talented (shared with ASD)--(no qualified applicants currently)
- Teacher–Science 7-12 (no qualified applicants currently)

Staffing for the infirmary is still problematic. We have filled a position for a Registered Nurse, but we still have openings for two Licensed Practical Nurse positions as well as a Registered Nurse Supervisor. We are relying on contract services for nursing in order to provide proper staffing coverage.

Legislative Information

Since the commencement of the 95th Arkansas General Assembly, the legislature has been busy with several new pieces of legislation. Here is a link to a document that provides key pieces of legislation related to education:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1pd6plUYjK6OABFbPMfYSs2IHE0HwKVL5-kEhjSJ56LQ/edit?usp=sharing>