

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

The Board of Trustees for the Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind met for their monthly meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025, in Wooly Auditorium.

Mr. Fagan called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Student Advisory Committee students led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Superintendent Walsh introduced members of the Student Advisory Committee. One student, the current student of the month, spoke about what it takes to achieve student of the month and what the assembly is like when it is announced. They also spoke about the Goalball competition in Missouri where they won two games and lost two games.

Another student spoke about the Student Advisory Committee meeting earlier in the day where they discussed name options for the new circular drive that will be built in front of the new building. The options that they settled on are “ARDB Avenue” and “Partnership Path.” These names will be put to a vote with the student body and then be brought to the board for approval.

A third Student Advisory Committee member spoke of the great discussion that they engaged in during the meeting about the street names and spoke about how sports and school were going for them.

Superintendent Walsh said that we have been working closely with 911 and Emergency Services to get all our buildings named appropriately to help with locating during an emergency.

Mr. Fagan Called Roll.

**Present:** Robert Fagan, Chair; Dr. John McAllister, Vice Chair; Jerry Belew, Board Member; Philip Powell, Board Member; K. Nicole Walsh, Superintendent; Interpreters; Members of the Community.

**Absent:** Cary Smith, Secretary; Phillip Miller, ASD Parent Rep

The next meeting will be held on December 16<sup>th</sup> at the Tornado Shelter.

## **Joint Agenda**

### **25-DB-60 Motion to Approve Joint Meeting Minutes, Financial Statements, and Personal Items**

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

### **25-DB-61 Motion to Approve ARDB Revised Outside Events Policy**

Superintendent Walsh brought the original policy for approval two months prior, but it needed to be put into legal language and adjusted so that we are better protected as a school. She said that it is important since we have so many outside events that take place on our campus. There are on average a minimum of two times a week, as well as a memorandum allowing our gym to be the home gym of eStem Public Charter School for their games.

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

### **25-DB-62 Motion to Approve ARDB Restraining and Protective Orders Policy**

Superintendent Walsh explained that we have had a rash of people saying that some people have restraining orders or protection orders against other people when they do not have them. This policy would be to avoid issues where someone is inappropriately removed from an event and to keep students safe.

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

### **Discussion Items – None**

### **ARDB Superintendent Report**

Christmas trees will be arriving on Saturday for the Alumni Association, they are selling 400 Christmas trees this year, and all proceeds will go to the Alumni Association.

The Alumni Association is buying cheer uniforms for the cheerleaders. They also donated to the Crystal Bridges and Camp War Eagle trip last year as well as purchased five 3-D printers for campus.

Flyers for Angel Tree are at the meeting. There are 58 so far for gifts on the Angel Tree and after 2 days, 25 of them have been sponsored. It is difficult getting all kids sponsored for gifts, so this was great.

Mr. Belew asked if this was just for here, Supt. Walsh replied yes that this is just an Angel Tree for our kids. The Angel Tree fund is at \$660.00 so far.

Mr. Fagan asked who to call for donations or questions, Supt. Walsh said to reach out to Kevin Lentz or Rebecca Nelson, or to go to Facebook or ParentSquare.

Veterans Day Assembly was great; we had performances and programs from both deaf and blind students. Our Deaf Department did a dance, and our Blind Department had singers and a pianist. It was a lovely program, and Barbara Cole did an amazing job.

Holiday Food Drive is coming up, we are looking to drop it all off on Thursday. We are feeding 88 families this year and we will have a surplus of food to put towards the Christmas Food Drive.

We have a lot of seasonal illnesses going around, a lot of absences to go along with it. One day there was almost 50% of the Blind Department out sick. Most have recovered and are back at school but still a lot of illness going around.

We've hired some new staff, they are Kurt and Stacy Swartzlander, Dionishia Vasquez-Aragon, and Rebecca Nelson.

We had our State Fair Day as well as White Cane Day that involved both campuses and were a lot of fun.

Trunk or Treat had a great turnout; we had 37 participants with trunks. We had members of ADE and Arkansas Game and Fish come out as well, everyone had so much fun.

Teacher shoutouts:

Judy Brint-Murphy – Judy is a talented and creative teacher known for her strong commitment to school events such as Homecoming, Prom, and Senior Night. She has also long overseen the Leopard Yearbook, and this year, she and Dakota Dalton are working together to produce the very first joint ARDB Yearbook.

Joe Reynolds – for his exceptional commitment to implement the ARC Curriculum and ensuring that materials are accessible for all students. He also serves as a lead case manager in the Blind Department.

Department has also added LeAnn and Laura, LEA Supervisor and IEP Facilitator and Coordinator respectively, they are making a huge impact already.

Our infirmary is fully staffed.

Total students in Deaf Department is 53.

Total students in Blind Department is 51.

We are trying to expand services and support that we offer. Behavior support was contracted until this year when we hired Sue Lyn Green as our Board Certified Behavior Analyst, and she has a caseload of 13 students that she serves in both departments.

In our dorms, we are working on independence and life skills. They are having group sessions to address things like how the week is going, hygiene needs, etc.

We are now ARC's flagship school nationwide; we are the only school that is fully implemented for both deaf and blind students.

Mr. Powell asked about the ASL and Braille Programs that were approved recently. Supt. Walsh responded that it has been an interesting task. We have to have certified testers before we can test staff, we are working with RIT to come down and train staff. We will be reaching out to UALR about getting their staff trained as well. The differentials will be helpful for retention when they are given after testing.

Mr. Fagan asked Supt. Walsh to tell what she found about a binder with Helen Keller's message to Governor Bailey. Supt. Walsh told how she found a ledger to the Confederate Nursing Home and a binder with original telegrams from Helen Keller as well as letters to Governor Bailey as well as the Governor of New York about her trip down here to inaugurate the building. One of them acknowledged what kind of flowers to greet her with and what her hotel room should have. Her trip here involved letter exchanges for close to a year. There were also several photographs from when she was here, and these will all be put in the museum once the new building is ready and we turn Shults House into the new museum.

#### **25-DB-63 Motion to Adjourn**

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

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Robert Fagan, Chair

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Cary Smith, Secretary