



Arkansas School for the Deaf

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Arkansas School for the Deaf

Superintendent's Report- December 2024

State of the School

Enrollment numbers: 106 (-1)

- High School- 34 (+1)
- Middle School- 20
- Lower School including ECC: 53

Academic Performance

Attendance rates:

- Attendance has been heavily influenced by illness this month. We have had lots of strep and influenza going through the schools.
- We have made efforts to ensure that staff have access to Clorox wipes and hand sanitizer to help prevent the spread of illness.

Activities:

Lower School:

- Focus has been heavily on Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS).
- Staff have received additional/refresher training on Behavior Intervention Plans for students that have them.
- Teachers were encouraged to target formative assessment as an instructional tool and guide this month.
- Behavior incidents were consistent through November. We expect to see some increase in December as instructional interruptions and atypical activities result in less structure and consistency.
- Several Interviews held for para educator positions and some changes made to staffing in LS, effective upon return in January.

Middle/High School:

- Derrick Jones has committed to playing baseball at ASU Three Rivers.
- Overall there has been a decrease in student behavior incidents from previous years.
- Staff are participating in Professional Learning Communities and departmental meetings to increase instructional effectiveness.

Both school participated in the Gobble Wobble and Turkey Trot. It was a first for a cross-campus activity. Staff responded to a survey following the event to give feedback for improvements. Feedback included more time needed to allow for better communication and transition. Information provided before the event, so that younger students could be pre-taught the games and an overall feeling that this connection was needed and desired by both staff and students.

Programs and Initiatives

Special Services: Special Education, Food Services, Nursing, Student and Family Support Services, and Statewide Services

Food Services:

October Meals Served as of 11/30: Breakfast – 1149

Lunch – 1283

Days Served – 16

Eligibility Numbers as of 11/30: Free 51, Reduced 16, and Paid 41.

Child nutrition is happy to welcome Donna Shields to the team as of 11/4, she is the new food prep coordinator.

Nursing:

Nurses provided current numbers of students requiring support: 41 students require at least an Individualized Healthcare Plan (IHP) to ensure they are cared for appropriately.

Nursing staff has been exceptionally shorthanded this month due to illness and the resignation of two nurses last month. We have established a contract agency for support until those positions can be filled.

Admissions/Special Education:

Admissions: One tour was set up for a family and one new student has joined ASD in Lower School.

Special Education: A new procedure was implemented: Annual IEPs are to be drafted in SEAS or SpEdTrack two calendar weeks prior to the meeting for review by Special Education Supervisor. An IEP draft will be sent to the parents for review no later than 3 days prior to the meeting so parents have time to review for a better opportunity of participation in the IEP meeting.

- Hospital Homebound services are being implemented for a middle school student at the ASD. Middle school team is working to provide a hybrid mix of school work and virtual instruction for special education and general education needs. Stacy and Teresa met with Kristin at DESE-OSE to review outstanding CAP items.

- The first week of combined Special Education Department was a success. Amanda and Debbie worked together to merge the two Special Education meeting calendars into one for easier scheduling and viewing.

Student and Family Support Services:

Counselors are communicating with parents on a frequent basis. The Behavioral Specialist is supporting school and dorm needs. This department was able to obtain more food from the food bank to ensure that students in need had access to additional supplies over the Thanksgiving Break. Additional CPI training is being scheduled for new staff.

Related Services:

- The push in therapy model for speech, OT and PT is proving to be quite successful. The students are not missing educational time and the therapists are able to see the results of their work in real time.
- The therapy team has enjoyed participating in extra activities this month including field trips to the zoo and St. Joseph's farm. They also assisted the students in the Thanksgiving festivities as well as setting up a system for students to receive Christmas gifts.
- The audiologist has been focused on making sure each student with a cochlear implant has a current map/program. In reviewing medical records, it was revealed that most of the elementary students have not been mapped in a very long time. The parents were contacted to set up appointments for a check up with their managing clinical audiologist.
- There has also been a concerted effort to increase hearing aid use time for students who are seeking a cochlear implant. All in all, November has been a great month for the therapy team.
- Goals for December
 - Enhance the infirmary program with increasing the numbers of nursing staff members.
 - Have all documentation submitted to ADE Special Education department.
 - Continued compliance with Special Education/Due Process practices through continued monitoring and training for teachers who serve in the role of "case manager"/Advocate.
 - Continued creation and focus on a more robust activities program for the residential students.
 - Continued provision of mental health therapy/support for residential students.

Staffing

New hires, retirements, and resignations

- New Hires: Donna Shields (Food Prep Coordinator ASD), Art Lundberg (Security Officer)
- Retirements:
- Resignations/Termination: Gina Scroggins (Cook ASD), Lesley Thomas (Administrative Assistant ASD), Ashley Harris (Teacher ASD), Patricia Edwards (LPN ASBVI), Sandi Hillard (RN ASBVI)

Professional development opportunities and outcomes

- Cross-campus Tours were held for all staff on the Friday before Thanksgiving Break.

Staff recognition and achievements

- KaAnn Varner: Elizabeth Moody (Media Specialist for both schools): She has worked so hard to make the Reading is Fun book give away for students happen. There have been many challenges to finding a time that worked for everyone. Elizabeth did not give up. She diligently worked through several revised times to find a day and time that worked. Elizabeth's awesome ASL storytelling skills have been on full display. Elizabeth's chosen story was "The Mitten". The way she used the book, told the story, expanded details, engaged all students and an abundance of patience was exemplary.
- Roy DePriest: I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to sing the praises of James Hayes, Eddie Tuzon, and Travis Caldwell. James, Eddie, and Travis are all self-starters who take initiative and pursue their work independently and ambitiously. James has saved the schools tens of thousands of dollars on service and repair work that he has done "in house" versus having it outsourced by a third party. Eddie continues to eagerly and aggressively pursue his assigned work; he is a top performer by completing more work requests than any other tech. Travis eagerly takes on responsibility with a genuine concern and interest in the department's most important customers, our students!

School Operations

Facilities and maintenance updates

- ASD/ASBVI Facilities Department remains very busy. The Facilities Department's "OperationsHERO" statistics are improving. Previously reported, "Queued" requests were at 372 and "Started" requests were at 218. As of December 5th, "Queued" requests are at 203 and "Started" requests are at 199. The department's average number of days to complete a request is 23 days for the current fiscal year. Watch for that value to decrease in subsequent reports.

ASBVI Maintenance Shop sanitary sewer service clean out was removed and replaced the week of November 18th. Superintendent's residence roof was replaced the week of November 25th. Significant progress has been made on the fencing project. At the time of this writing, 98% of line posts have been set across both campuses, while chain link fabric is starting to go up on the East side of the ASD campus.

Upcoming projects:

Installation of the tankless water heater racks will start during Christmas break. Bradley or Marsden will be the first buildings slated for the upgrade.

Needs and Concerns:

- NAC HVAC equipment continues to "Live on a Prayer" and operate by the grace of God. The department has invested a lot of time and money in the last several years on the dilapidated

equipment at NAC. Virtually all of the equipment, save the boiler, is original to the construction of the building and desperately needs to be updated. Any remodel/renovation work planned for NAC as part of the phase one package of campus improvements will certainly have to include changing out and updating the MEP systems.

- Breeding Cafeteria's equipment is also overdue to be upgraded, especially the boiler and large AHU that serves the dining room and downstairs spaces.
- Annual fire protection systems tests and inspections started the week of November 25th at ASBVI. State Mandated Inspections require annual tests and inspections of all fire protection systems which include fire extinguishers; fire alarm panels; sprinkler risers; sprinkler riser backflow assemblies; sprinkler heads; alarm devices; and kitchen exhaust hood fire suppression systems.

Technology Department Updates

- Student ID badges were distributed and are in use for all students.
- All emergency information systems (Carousels) are in use.
- Camera systems and improved card reader door access panels are being investigated.

Security

- The Director of Safety and Security worked with our Grants Coordinator to apply for a grant related to school safety. Results will be forthcoming.
- Campus fencing has been overseen and addressed by both security and facilities.
- ALL security personnel (contract and employed) are now Certified School Safety Officers.

Fiscal Management

Fundraising: ASD collected \$4300 in November for student special events. We have already seen a high level of interest and support in December for our Angel Tree Campaign. Give Butter is up and running for donations as well.

Fiscal Reporting: Dr. Barnes and Nicole Walsh met with Kristy Hobson, our temporary budget manager, to review expenditures for the school year to date. We are pleased to report that we are roughly 42% through the fiscal year and are either at or well below budget for each area with the exception of sports. Sports teams have spent a higher percentage of their budget than allotted thus far. This is most likely due to the number of out of state trips planned for football, goalball, Blind School track, and Deaf School cheer. This cost difference will be able to be absorbed by other areas for the remainder of the school year, however we may need to review the budget and options for next year.