



Arkansas School for the Deaf

2400 W. Markham • Little Rock, Arkansas • 72205 • (501) 324-9506 • Fax (501) 324-9553

Jacob Oliva
Secretary

K. Nicole Walsh
Superintendent

Superintendent's Report for ASB and ASD- June 2025

State of the School - ASB

Enrollment numbers:

- All School: 63 (55 with Seniors off of the roster)

State of the School - ASD

Enrollment numbers:

- High School: 35
- Middle School: 20
- Lower School including ECC: 53

Celebrations/Events:

- ASB and ASD Graduation
- Parent and Student Building Reveal
- We are actively collaborating with DF&A to work on the merger of the schools
- ADE representatives held one on one meetings with interested staff to discuss teacher certification options
- Staff celebration honoring retirees Lynn Brooks, Eddie Schmeckenbecher, and Millie Whitley, as well as a family addition for Lenae Haley
- FY 26 ANCRC Awards - Arkansas School for the Deaf Restoration of Parnell Hall - Phase V, \$1,118,000.00
- First of five back-to-school registration options, June 6th Back-to-School Registration results:
 - ASD: 8 students
 - ASBVI: 4 students
- In April, the 2025 Arkansas SkillsUSA Championship took place in Hot Springs, AR, in which our students competed in two high school-level categories against peers from across the state. We won gold in Photography and Opening/Closing Ceremony (Parliamentary

Procedures). Our gold medalists will represent ASD at the National SkillsUSA Championship this June in Atlanta, GA. See attached flyer for further details.

Building Updates:

- All previous buildings have been removed
- Major dirt work begins as site grading kicks off.
- A guard shack is being installed between Parnell and NAC, and a Nabholz security guard will be stationed there as our security guard when students return.

Human Capital Updates ASB:

Termination/ Resignation:

- Courtney Hauf – Education ParaProfessional
- Levi Ryals - Education ParaProfessional

New Hire:

- Mary Allen – Rodger – Registered Nurse

Transfers:

- None

Offers Provided:

- Canedra Bingham – Certified Bachelors Teacher
- Nionda Finney – Certified Bachelors Teacher
- Darren Thomas – Residential Activities Supervisor
- Jayden Sprout – Residential Advisor
- Bobbi Johnson – Residential Advisor

Positions Posted:

- Employment Report sent by email

Human Capital Updates ASD:

Termination/ Resignation:

- None

Promotion:

- Nancy Hicks – Certified Master’s Teacher

Transfers:

- None

Offers Provided:

- Bobbie Davenport – LPN

- Nikita Albert – Food Preparation Coordinator

Positions Posted:

- Employment Report sent by email

Shout Outs ASB:

- Primary Teacher:
 - Mrs. Christina Robertson, Kindergarten - We would like to highlight Mrs. Robertson for her hard work and dedication to our kindergarten students. Mrs. Tina works hard and did a wonderful job, along with Ms. Josie Hall and Jazmyn Adams on the West Wing Celebration this month.

Shout Outs ASD:

- Primary Teacher:
 - Gina Wooten, Kindergarten - Gina has been a teacher at ASD for 23 years. She is also a proud ASD Alumnus. Gina currently teaches Kindergarten and is an awesome teacher. Learning is fun in her class. Gina keeps students engaged through imagination and hands on lesson plans. Gina approaches every day with enthusiasm, fostering a love for learning in her students. Gina is more than a teacher, she is a role model, guide and mentor. Gina's former students often come back to visit her and thank her for the difference she made in their lives.
- Secondary Teacher:
 - Brandy Mimms, Dance Teacher - A huge shout-out to Brandy for her exceptional work in preparing our students for our very first Spring Dance Concert. The concert truly highlighted Brandy's commitment to helping students hone their skills. Everyone commended the performance and is looking forward to future events from our dance team!

Shout Outs Joint:

- Custodial/Maintenance Team:
 - Sharon Smith, James Hayes and Eduardo Tuzon - We would like to take this opportunity to recognize Sharon Smith who consistently demonstrates ownership of her work and responsibilities. Sharon is always mindful of upcoming events and activities that require her attention. Her work is always complemented by faculty and staff. We also want to express our appreciation for James Hayes and Eduardo Tuzon who never fail to exemplify quintessential initiative and ambition. These employees know what it means to be self-directed. All three are to be commended!

School Operations Updates

Facilities Department

Key Highlights:

Demolition of Rasnick and Pack Hall Lower Dorm is complete. Those two buildings were the last to be demolished, completing the demolition phase of the new building project.

The threat of an incipient electrical fire at Riggs Museum was averted when building occupants acted quickly to notify campus security who cut power to the building. An assessment of the building's load center that was determined to be the source of the unique odor of burning wires, revealed a panel with some faulty breakers; all of which were removed and replaced along with several others that were suspected to be potentially problematic.

Maintenance and Repairs

- **Routine Maintenance:** Two hundred and twenty-five requests were created during the month of May. Overview of scheduled maintenance tasks completed during the month (e.g., HVAC, plumbing, electrical).
- **Emergency Repairs:** Included in the number above, there was a total of 35 work requests of an "Expedite" priority level for the month of May. These requests were predominantly for clogged toilets and plumbing/AC leaks. There were two gas leaks on high pressure lines and a water leak in the demolition area caused by the demolition subcontractor. These leaks were quickly repaired to restore water and gas service back to the campus. The electrical fire in Riggs Museum referenced above required service and repair to the electrical panel in the Museum's northmost hallway.

Upcoming Facilities Improvement Projects

Summertime is always the best opportunity for the Facilities Department to carry out projects that would be too disruptive during the regular school year and that require buildings to be unoccupied or minimally occupied.

- Clean up and organize ASBVI Maintenance Shop
- Install tankless water heater racks in Marsden and Bradley
- Convert NAC gym lighting from high energy bulbs to LEDs
- Outline of any projects planned for the next month or quarter.

Safety and Compliance

Roy DePriest successfully completed the "OSHA 30" training and will receive an OSHA 30-hour DOL card. As a result, watch for "*Safety Inspections*"; "*Compliance Updates*"; and "*Safety Initiatives*" announcements in future reports.

Energy and Sustainability

- **Energy Usage:** Whenever possible, we take advantage of quick, high-impact opportunities to save energy and improve efficiency. For instance, when fluorescent bulbs need replacement, we either swap out the entire fixture or retrofit it with ballast-bypass LED lamps. Routine preventive maintenance on HVAC equipment also falls into this category, as it ensures systems run efficiently and consume less energy. Larger-scale efforts—like upgrading building envelopes, replacing aging equipment, or performing deep-system retrofits—go beyond these straightforward tasks. Those types of projects qualify as capital improvement initiatives: they involve permanent structural changes, significant investment, long-term planning, and require expertise and budget capacity beyond our department’s routine maintenance role.
- **Sustainability Initiatives:** Work has started to develop a recycling program that will be ready and in place when the new building opens in the winter of 2027. The program will be designed to generate revenue and save costs associated with waste removal that results naturally when waste stream is reduced by an amount equal to the amount of material recycled. Watch for more information to be provided as a part of subsequent reports.

Staffing and Training

- **Current Staffing Levels:** In May, our department’s staffing numbers remained unchanged—one team member left, and another transferred in from our umbrella agency, ADE.
- **Training and Development:** In June, the custodial team will attend the inaugural ASPMA Custodial Conference at Lake Hamilton School District. Hosted by ASPMA (an AAEA constituent group), this event features professional training and breakout sessions. Later, in August, both the maintenance and custodial teams will participate in a full-day training at the Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative. This session will cover essential workplace safety topics, including bloodborne pathogens, chemical hazard communication (“Right to Know”), asbestos, and related subjects.

Challenges & Opportunities

- **Challenge:** We are working to fill all open positions, so the department has enough people. We also need team members with the necessary skills and expertise to meet our goals.
- **Opportunities:** We have previously lowered costs by closing inactive utility accounts that still incurred a fixed monthly fee even without usage—since utilities typically charge a minimum cost simply for account availability. In the coming weeks and months, we will systematically review all open accounts to identify further opportunities for cost reduction and ensure we’re not paying for unused services.

Classroom Updates

ASBVI

Principal: Cole

Key Highlights

- **Year-End Activities:** A full slate of end-of-year events kept staff and students engaged.
- **Graduations & Promotions:**
 - High School: 8 seniors graduated; all plan to attend Western School for the Blind in the fall.
 - West Wing: 2 kindergarten students promoted to first grade.
 - Sixth Grade: 6 students promoted to seventh grade.

Staffing & Enrollment

- **Projected Roster:** 63 students currently enrolled; will drop to 55 after seniors depart. New referrals are pending.
- **Upcoming Hires (effective July 21):**
 - Special Education Teacher: Terri Stokes
 - 6th Grade Teacher: Trista Burton
 - 2nd Grade Teacher: Nikki Finney
 - 3rd Grade Teacher: Canedra Bingham

Attendance & Behavior

- **Attendance:** Gradual decline in the final week of school as anticipated.
- **Discipline:**
 - Suspensions: 0
 - Lunch Detentions: 4
- **PBIS Initiatives:**
 - Weekly counseling classes, “Student of the Month,” and ClassDojo rewards.
 - Planning to add a ROAR Store in 2025–26 to expand motivational incentives.

Challenges

- **Academic:** Underperformance in language arts, writing, Braille, and adaptive technology, largely due to the extended time required for students to complete work. Summer PD on HQIM materials is expected to address pacing and curriculum alignment.

- **Behavioral:** Recurring negative talk among a small group of students; adjustment period for new students learning ASBVI expectations; external stressors (family dynamics, caretaking responsibilities) continue to affect behavior.
- **Resource:** Current laminator can only handle thin (3 mil) film, leading to frequent material damage. Plan to purchase a heavy-duty laminator and thicker film (up to 10 mil) for greater durability.

Action Plan & Goals

- **Academic Goal:** Finalize 2025–26 programming and curriculum pacing with HQIM resources.
- **Behavioral Goal:** Increase staff use of de-escalation strategies and practical Behavior Intervention Plans that don't require full 1:1 support.
- **Culture Goal:** Reinforce student responsibility and positive conduct through SEL collaboration.
- **Strategies:**
 - Prioritize staffing and programming needs for the new school year.
 - Analyze behavior incident timing to refine intervention scheduling.
- **Success Metric:** Reduction in SWIS behavior incident reports for targeted students.

ASD Primary

Principal: Varner

Key Highlights

- Grades 3–5 visited the Mid-America Science Museum in Hot Springs
- Teacher Appreciation Week included chair massages provided by the ASD Foundation and breakfast organized by paras
- ECC students took a trip to the zoo
- ASD teachers completed a survey to select summer professional development dates
- Joint Field Day was held on the ASD/ASBVI football field
- K–5 students enjoyed a “Spring into Summer” event at Anthony School
- Grades K–2 had a picnic outing at Funland Park in North Little Rock
- Campuswide group photo on the site of the former CTE building
- Students from K–5 attended a “Making Accidents Disappear” safety assembly led by Scott Davis
- Lower School students and staff lined the halls to cheer on passing seniors during the Senior Walkthrough
- Lower School staff attended the ASD graduation ceremony

Demographics & Behavior

- Suspensions: 2 total
- PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports):

- Program includes the “ROAR Store” which is a token-reward system promoting positive behavior and is a huge motivator for our students.
- Suggested planning for a “big-ticket” rewards catalog to further boost engagement.

Challenges & Insights

- **Academics:** Students underperforming across subjects—curriculum pacing needs alignment with new HQMI materials; this will be addressed in Summer PD.
- **Behavior:** Increases in behavior incidents often involve students with delayed language development; family and mental health factors are contributing—SEL team support remains essential.
- **Resources:** Current laminator (3 Mil capacity) is insufficient for durable teaching materials; recommending upgrade to 5 Mil laminator and film for longevity.

Improvement Plan & Metrics

- **Academic Goal:** Monitor use of HQMI materials via ClassWork Tracker (CWT) forms
- **Behavioral Goal:** Increase de-escalation techniques, ensure Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) are practical without requiring 1:1 staffing
- **School Culture Goal:** Continue promoting respect among students and staff
- **Strategies:**
 - Collaborate with SEL team and staff to develop responsibility-focused initiatives during Health & Safety classes (2025–2026)
 - Analyze classroom observation data to assess the impact of time-of-day on behavior trends
- **Success Measure:** Reduction in SWIS (School-Wide Information System) incident reports among targeted students

ASD Secondary

Principal: Boland

Key Highlights

In May, our department’s momentum continued as we celebrated prom on May 1 and achieved notable success at the Arkansas SkillsUSA competition—our winners have now qualified to compete at the national championship in June.

School Demographics & Attendance

- **Total Enrollment:** 55 students
- **Grade Breakdown:**

- 6th: 7 7th: 8 8th: 5 9th: 6 10th: 5 11th: 8 12th: 16

- **Attendance Rates:**

- Middle School: 92%
- High School: 91%

Illness-related absences and low motivation due to “spring fever.”

Academic Performance

High School MAP Data

Reading:

- ASD High School students demonstrated varied growth and achievement from Spring 2023-2024 to 2024-2025, with an overall median growth in reading at the 65th percentile. Although growth and achievement percentiles improved overall, achievement remains low, emphasizing the need for targeted instructional support. Focus on interventions for grades 9 and 10, sustain enrichment for grades 11 and 12, monitor progress with MAP Growth, and implement data-driven instructional adjustments.

Mathematics:

- ASD High School's median growth percentile was overall at the 77th, and varying grades indicated different levels of growth and achievement in mathematics. Grade 12 had the highest growth but the lowest achievement, Grade 10 demonstrated strong growth despite low achievement, and Grade 11 had high achievement with moderate growth. Focus on enhancing Grade 12 achievement, supporting the growth and achievement of Grade 10, boosting Grade 9 performance, and utilizing Grade 11 strengths for peer mentoring.

Middle School MAP Data:

Reading:

- Grade 6 shows median growth at the 39th percentile, leaning towards lower quintiles, while Grade 7 median growth increases to the 47th percentile with a more balanced distribution. Grade 8 achieves the highest median growth at the 56th percentile, with an even distribution across percentiles. Achievement medians are high across grades, with Grade 7 maintaining a median at the 100th percentile. Grade 6 demonstrates improvement from 80% to 100%, and Grade 8 remains stable at 80%. Overall, growth and achievement trends indicate positive progression from Grade 6 to Grade 8.

Mathematics:

- Growth median percentiles and achievement distributions differ by grade, with Grade 8 exhibiting the highest growth median at the 54th percentile and Grade 7 achieving the highest achievement median at the 100th percentile. Grade 8 shows strong growth and achievement,

while Grades 6 and 7 encounter challenges with lower growth medians and high proportions of students below the 20th percentile in growth.

Academic Milestones & Events

- **Promotion & Awards Ceremonies:** June 4.
- **Graduation, Traditions and Senior Activities:** included senior lunch with the Superintendent, rehearsal, award event, parent dinner, exams, senior walkthrough, graduation ceremony at Woolly Auditorium, and College & Career Day.
- **Staff & Events in May:** makeup day, building reveal, and Teacher Appreciation Week.

Extracurricular Activities

- **Athletics:** ASD Athletic Banquet on May 15.
- **Arts:** Spring Dance Concert showcasing student talent under Brandy Mimms.
- **Community Building:** Campus-wide yearbook photo May 14.

Behavioral Data

- **Total Suspensions:** 3 (two for fighting – 2 days OSS; one for arson – 10 days OSS)

Staffing & Resource Needs

- **Vacancies:** Critical positions remain unfilled—Art, English, and Math teachers.

Special Services Department

Key Highlights

- **Field Day:** Both campuses enjoyed a well-organized Field Day featuring cook-outs, games, cotton candy, and social interaction—enhancing teamwork, physical activity, and school spirit.
- **Graduations & Senior Activities:** High school seniors graduated; seniors from both campuses also participated in safe, trip-based events.
- **Dismissals & Promotions:** Several end-of-year ceremonies were held, including kindergarten promotions (West Wing) and sixth-grade promotions.
- **Construction Progress:** Campus demolition and renovation are progressing smoothly.
- **Staff Appreciation:** Multiple recognition events honored staff across roles—teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and service providers.

Food Services

- **Breakfast:** 1,364 meals
- **Lunch:** 1,493 meals
- **Days Served:** 20
- **Eligibility:** Free 47, Reduced 10, Paid 38

Health & Nursing

- Health Survey Report has been submitted as a separate document.

Family & Student Support

- **Dean of Students:** Adam continues to provide daily behavior support, particularly with disengaged students.
- **Counseling:** Anna offers group and individual sessions, extended dorm support, and weekly food bags for food-insecure families.
- **RPI Counseling:** Weekly high school sessions have been effective; Candace (with a long-term interpreter) will depart at year-end.
- **Dorm Supervision:**
 - **ASBVI:** C-shift dorms are running efficiently under Doug, with new staff addressing prior shortages.
 - **ASD:** Rita, Donald, and JR (C-shift supervisor) manage student support and behavior well.
- **Behavioral Therapy:** Sue focused on five students through Functional Behavioral Assessments and continues to train dorm and teaching staff.
- **SCPI Evaluations:** 20 assessments received from UALR; trained team on ASD campus is completing evaluations in the next two weeks.

Statewide Services & Programs

- **Early Intervention:**
 - Developmental Therapy Sessions: 33 (ages 0–3)
 - Consults (3–5 years): 6
 - IFSP Conferences (0–3): 11
 - New Referrals (0–3): 3
 - Evaluations (0–3): 4
- **Funding:** First Connections awarded an additional \$1,000.
- **Presentations:** Dr. Cobb and Eddie presented on Deaf community accessibility at Arkansas Financial CPE Conference.
- **Professional Training:** PTRF, ADE Knowb4, and routine staff meetings completed.

Compliance & Collaboration

- Submitted bid for renewing the statewide audiology contract.
- Completed mandated trainings (IA, Bullying, Human Trafficking, Targeted Assistance).

- Ongoing collaboration with First Connections, Early Childhood Vision & Hearing Collaborative, and ACH Speech Department.

Related Services (Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, and Audiology)

- New LSL literacy partnership with Beth Helms and Dr. Henry using RISE-enhanced multisensory reading interventions.
- Renovation of former nurse's station into a centralized Speech/Related Services Suite.
- All SLPs registered for Inclusive Classrooms Summit 2025.
- Submitted purchase requests for sensory tools and swings to support behavior regulation.
- SPICE grant loss led to CARS kit funding request to enhance in-house diagnostic capability.

Financial Update

- Total Reimbursement Submitted (as of May 31): \$261,491.70
 - Approved: \$146,646.10
 - Pending: \$114,845.60

Special Education and Admissions

ASD Tours for Potential Students: 1 tour conducted; 3 tours canceled.

New Admissions: No new ASD admissions this month.

Applications Ready for Committee Review (Fall 2025): 3 applications prepared.

IEP (Individualized Education Program) Updates

ASD (Arkansas School for the Deaf)

- **IEP Meetings and SOPs:** 30 meetings held.
- **Existing Data Reviews (EDRs):** 1 conducted.
- **Evaluation Programming Conferences with IEP Development:** 8 conducted.
- **Manifestation Determination Reviews (MDRs):** 2 conducted.
- **Early Childhood Transitions to Kindergarten:** 5 transitions completed.

Student Support & Transition Services

- **ASD Transition Team:** Monthly meetings established with Transition Consultant Jeremy Hogue.
- **University of Kentucky Partnership:** Supporting GSC App and SDLMI Research (Cohort 2). Digital permission slips to be distributed via Parent Square in early June to families of incoming 9th–12th graders for participation in the 2025–2026 school year.
- **Graduating Seniors:** All SOPs (Summary of Performance) completed.

- **Audiology Training:** Mary Martha provided a lesson on basic audiogram interpretation and types of hearing loss to Stacy and Debbie.
- **Pocahontas Senior SOP Meeting:** Stacy, Mandy, and Erika assisted with information on applying to the Arkansas Deaf Career Center (ADCC) program for the next academic year.
- **IEP Reviews:** Julie Amstutz reviewed IEPs prior to student meetings, both in person and via SEAS access.
- **Discipline Documentation:** Stacy met with KaAnn to discuss documentation related to IDEA compliance.

Professional Development & Training

- **LEA Job-Alike Meeting at ARESC:** Scheduled bi-monthly for 2024–2025; May session canceled.
- **Early Childhood Forum for EC Coordinators:** Held virtually on a monthly basis.
- **LEA Call by DESE:** Conducted monthly.

Challenges & Successes

Challenges

- Ongoing efforts to ensure compliant paperwork.
- Received a state grievance for ASBVI on June 2, 2025.
- Received a state complaint for ASD on June 2, 2025.

Successes

- Completed SOPs for all graduating seniors (led by Tricia, Tommy, and team).
- All Kindergarten transition files prepared for DESE review under the Corrective Action Plan (CAP); remaining files uploaded to the SMMS system.
- Four IEP files ready for DESE-OSE review under CAP; files not uploaded to SMMS per guidance from Yvonne Greene.
- Conducted numerous student meetings this month.
- Held collaboration meetings to review discipline continuity between school and dormitory settings; identified gaps and assigned action items to individuals.