



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 September 2024

Dr. Chris Barnes, Interim Superintendent

This month, Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ASBVI) has been working diligently to get school started on the best footing. Below are some major points showcasing **ASBVI PRIDE** for the current month:

Current Enrollment: 63 students (30 in PreK-6th Grade and 33 in Grades 7-12)

October 2023 Enrollment: 67 students (30 in PreK-6th Grade and 37 in Grades 7-12)

Academics

- ASBVI administered the NWEA MAP assessment for all students. The NWEA MAP assessment has been utilized to provide us with a snapshot of student performance upon return from summer break, which will serve as a baseline for intervention support. We are analyzing these results now and plan to report these results to the Board next month.
- ASBVI has expanded its course offerings with a partnership through Arkansas Tech University to provide concurrent credit Advanced Placement US History and World History courses. Students are able to earn both college credit and weighted credit for these courses as a result of this partnership. We plan to expand this partnership to other courses in the future.
- ASBVI has assigned two staff members (one in literacy and one in math) as instructional coaches to support the implementation of high-quality instruction in literacy and math. These coaches are providing job-embedded instructional support to teachers centered around building capacity in understanding content standards, implementing effective classroom management processes, and engaging in formative assessment practices that serve as the base data for professional learning community processes. Novice or beginning teachers are the primary focal points for support, but all teachers have access to these instructional coaches.



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- Classroom walkthrough observations are underway, with a new focus each week around a facet of instruction along with safety procedures. The data is reviewed by administrators in order to determine what professional development support is needed to enhance the quality of instruction and thereby the academic success of students.

Student Support

- All elementary students (K-6) have weekly sessions with the school counselor to support social and emotional growth through CharacterStrong lessons.
- The school counselor plans to develop a relational skills focus group, which will target specific negative social interactions to provide the skills for participants to respond appropriately in social situations and resolve conflict peacefully.
- Several students are being monitored by the social worker for family crises with one impending court date and possibly more to come. Families at risk of homelessness, neglect, and abuse are being reviewed jointly by the school counselor and school social worker.
- Students in need of additional academic support will receive intensive tier II interventions in the classroom. Tier III one-on-one reading intervention using Wilson Reading System will be provided to students significantly below grade level.

Human Capital

- Recruiting quality personnel continues to be a challenge for ASBVI. There are currently about five positions that need to be filled in order for us to provide the highest caliber of service to our students. Position vacancies needing filled are as follows:
 - Gifted and Talented Coordinator (shared with ASD)
 - 7-12 Science Teacher
 - Family and Consumer Science Teacher
 - Instructional Paraprofessional
 - Birth-to-Three, STAAC (Short Term Academic Assessment Classroom) Teacher



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Fiscal Governance

- The ESSER III funding reserves of approximately \$26000 must be encumbered by September 30. ASBVI is coordinating with the technology team to analyze the adaptive technology needs, and these funds will be used to expand availability and access to adaptive technology devices, with particular focus on purchasing multilined refreshable braille devices.

Facilities, Transportation, and School Safety

- Campus security is on the forefront of priorities for ASBVI. Security sweeps of external doors have been conducted by superintendent and Director of Facilities. Staff have been instructed to support security efforts by ensuring that all exterior doors are closed and locked upon entry and exit of the buildings. Staff have also been empowered to submit maintenance requests through OperationsHERO for any breach of secure egress. With regard to presence on campus, the ASBVI coordinated with ASD to establish hours of standard operation, which will ensure that buildings are accessed at limited times and that the campus is vacated by most staff by 6pm each night.
- HVAC issues and water leaks continue to plague ASBVI facilities. The Learning Center has experienced water leaks and HVAC outages. Hill Cottage also experienced HVAC issues. Roy DePriest and his crew have been taking care of issues as they pop up.
- There have been some inefficiencies in the process for loading charter buses at the end of the week. Mrs. Walsh and I are working with Steve Partridge to develop ways to streamline the process, ensuring that instructional time is capitalized.
- SCM and Mackey Mitchell Architects conducted additional stakeholder feedback sessions via Zoom with ASBVI paraprofessionals and residential advisors. These sessions were well attended by those staff members.

Community & Stakeholder Partnerships

- ASBVI is collaborating with World Services for the Blind (WSB) to develop a independent living program, which will provide direct transitional support to



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ASBVI students ages 14+. The program is planned to be housed on-site and will be coordinated with transitional support staff from WSB.

- Arkansas Ophthalmological Society provided a donation of \$30,919.12 to ASBVI, which resulted from their fundraising efforts on the sale of ISO-certified eclipse glasses during the Great American Eclipse this past April. Over 17 ophthalmology offices across the state contributed to the fundraising efforts. Proceeds will be directed to the student special needs fund at ASBVI.
- Friends of ASB met to discuss their activities for the school year. There was a great amount of excitement regarding the potential for partnerships with ASD.
- ASBVI has established a daily schedule of social media postings designed to showcase students, staff, alumni, and the school. Below is a framework for these regular weekly postings:
 - Mondays- "Making An Impact" Monday (classroom activity spotlight)
 - Tuesdays- Trivia Tuesday (guess the teacher/place/answer the question)
 - Wednesdays- "Who's Who?" Wednesday (student/alumni spotlight)
 - Thursdays- Throwback Thursday (historical fact/info about the school)
 - Fridays- Faculty Friday (staff spotlight)
- ASBVI is working toward implementing the ParentSquare system that will aide the school in providing consistent two-way communication to parents from administrators, teachers, and staff via text, email, app, and voice messaging.

Transition Activities with ASD

- ASBVI has collaborated with ASD to actively engage leadership in collaborative team meetings. These have been organized for the instructional leadership team, special services team, and the school principal team.
- ASBVI and ASD residential advisors collaborated for training on de-escalation strategies through the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI), which is a component of our multi-tiered system of support for behavioral intervention.
- ASBVI Residential Services is working with the ASD Residential Services to plan and organize some joint social activities. This is an extension of the integrated dining experiences that ASBVI residential students are sharing with ASD residential students.



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Upcoming Activities:

- “Take Your Legislator to School” Month Activity—September 20, 2024 (TBD)
- ASBVI Literacy Night—October 10, 2024 (5:00pm-7:00pm)