

Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
7725 North College Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46240

ISBVI Board Meeting Minutes
January 24, 2022
Virtual Board Meeting
9:30 a.m.

Members Present Virtually:

Mr. James Michaels, Chair
Ms. Kathy Botkin, Vice Chair
Mr. Tom Adams
Mr. John Kissling
Mr. Don Koors
Mr. Patrick Rhodes

Members Not Present:

Senator Liz Brown

Administration Present Virtually: Mr. Jim Durst, Superintendent; Mr. Raouf Estefanos, Assistant Superintendent of Business; Ms. Tiffany Sanders, Interim Superintendent of Programs; Mr. Jay Wilson, MS/HS Principal; Ms. Cara Kennett, Interim Elementary Principal; Ms. Toni Hughes, Director of Outreach; Mr. Jason Askren, Director of Residential Services; Mr. Todd Malone, Maintenance Supervisor.

I. Call to Order

Board Chair, Mr. James Michaels, called the meeting to order at 9:30am and took roll.

II. Approval of Minutes (Attachments 1 & 2)

The minutes from the October 25, 2021 (Attachment 1) meeting were reviewed.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Ms. Botkin to approve the minutes as presented; motion carried.

The minutes from the December 14, 2021 (Attachment 2) meeting were reviewed.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Adams and seconded by Ms. Botkin to approve the minutes as presented; motion carried.

III. School Protocol Inquiry

Superintendent Durst noted that this meeting, as in all virtual meetings, was being recorded.

Mr. Kevin Wurster, parent of a current student, was introduced by Board Chair James Michaels and invited to share his concerns regarding masking protocol with the Board.

Mr. Wurster expressed concerns about the masking protocol due to Covid. He would like to see the school stop the mask protocol since many other areas of the country have stopped mask mandates. His son is experiencing skin issues from wearing masks and has also been depressed from being required to wear a mask. Mr. Wurster believes that masks are not necessary because coronavirus is not new. He believes that the sickness at the school has to do more with what students are being fed, the amount of exercise they have and the water they are consuming and would rather see the school give more attention to these items rather than having a mask policy. Mr. Wurster stated that more and more of the top doctors in the United States are proving that the virus is a hoax, that Omicron is similar to a common cold, and that kids are not becoming sick and dying from the virus. He believes that students that come to school sick should be required to wear masks, but that healthy students should not be required to do so.

Mr. Wurster requested security bond information from the Board and asked if the Governor was on the same security bond as the Board members.

Superintendent Durst replied that the school Board members are bonded, and that the school would provide this information to Mr. Wurster within 24 hours. The school does not have any information regarding the Governor's surety bond. Mr. Durst also informed Mr. Wurster that the school is self-insured through the state.

Mr. Michaels thanked Mr. Wurster for his time and input. In addition, Mr. Michaels stated that no one wants to continue masking any longer than necessary, however, the Board will support the school's decision to continue to mask at this time to ensure the health of students and staff.

IV. Superintendent's Report

A. School Update

Elementary Report – Ms. Kennett

The elementary welcomed a new teacher, Yovonne Grego. Yovonne comes to ISBVI with a wealth of knowledge and experience and will be teaching in the fourth-grade classroom.

ISBVI has been collaborating with The Children's Museum. In late January, they will be bringing one of their Mission Jurassic Dinosphere prototypes for students to explore and test.

MS/HS Report – Mr. Wilson

The middle school welcomed one new student at the beginning of the second semester.

CBI (Community Based Instruction) has been paused for January. Administrators will monitor Covid data to determine when it will resume.

The following staffing changes have taken place within MS/HS education: Ronnie Kennett is co-teaching middle school language arts with Judy Reynolds, Jeff Snyder moved to high school language arts, Cindy Cook is teaching a language arts class, and Janeen Atkins started as a MS residential mentor. Staff are doing an excellent job supporting each other and covering classes as needed.

Acquiring substitute Teachers is still a struggle at this time.

Outreach Report – Ms. Hughes

The department is currently serving approximately 310 students in 45 districts.

Short Course has been put on hold for the second semester. The two Short Course teachers are performing consulting work with direct services/contracts.

Braille Challenge is scheduled for February 26, and Cane Quest will be held the next day on February 27. Both will be virtual again this year. The school has received several registrations for both, and Outreach staff are in the process of finalizing the event.

Outreach is looking forward to offering summer camps again this summer.

Residential Services – Mr. Askren

The Forensics Team performed well and placed second overall in the conference, losing narrowly to Iowa breaking ISBVI's first-place streak for three consecutive years.

Wrestling and Cheerleading just finished their season. Unfortunately, the teams did not get as many matches in as the school had hoped for, but students were at least able to get back on the mats. The Conference meet scheduled for January 22 was canceled due to Covid related issues however, the Cheerleading competition was still able to take place virtually. Results are pending.

Junior sports this year are being canceled due to limited participation from other schools and current Covid numbers.

Residential groups from schools all over the country have been established and are meeting monthly to discuss topics facing residential programs.

Facilities Use – Mr. Durst

Currently, there are no outside groups or organizations using the facilities.

Physical Plant – Mr. Malone

The Churchman roof is in the final stages. Crews are performing metal work around the soffit and fascia. The project should be completed within the next 2 – 3 weeks.

The DA tank replacement in the steam plant was schedule to happen over the summer before heating season but due to recent problems with supply and delivery issues, it was delayed. The tank is scheduled to be delivered the week of January 31, 2022. It will not be able to be installed until the end of the heating season.

The school has experienced several weather-related emergencies within the last month. The first was a water main break in front near the tower. This was repaired the same day. The pavement that needs replacement will be done in the spring. In addition, there were six circulating pumps that needed to be replaced as well as two stand-alone boilers in the Elementary building.

B. Monthly Financial Statements (Attachments 3A, 3B & 3C)

Attachment 3A is the monthly financial statement for October 29, 2021. At that point, the year was 33% over, Point One expenditures were at 32.23%, Points Two through Nine reflected 48.43% spent, and overall expenditures totaled 34.92%.

Attachment 3B, the monthly statement for November 30, 2021, reflected the year was 42% over, 39.21% spent from Point One and 53.17% spent from Points Two through Nine and overall expenditures for the month totaled 41.53%.

Attachment 3C is the monthly financial statement for December 30, 2021. At this point, the year was 50% over, Point One expenditures were at 47.13%, Points Two through Nine reflected 56.87% spent, and overall expenditures were at 48.75%.

The recent salary increases, effective on the January 19, 2022 paycheck, will affect Point One by an average of \$500,000 annually. Since the raise took affect mid-year of the current fiscal year, Point One of this fiscal year will be affected by \$250,000 and will be covered with the 1% reversion. Next year, the increase should be funded on top of the budget.

C. Staff Metrics (Attachment 4)

Attachment 4 reflects the status of positions as of January 21, 2022, with 158 filled regular positions, 22 vacant regular positions, 19 filled intermittent positions and 18 vacant intermittent positions.

The school is down a significant number of positions and is finding it difficult to attract individuals. Retention continues to be an issue. There have been a significant number of resignations as individuals seek other employment opportunities with improved compensation. Recently, the state has provided salary increases for all state employees. The average was roughly a 5% increase across the board, based on where individuals were in their salary schedule and classification. The recent increase did not include teachers. The school is currently working with state personnel to devise an improved salary schedule for teachers and should have something tangible within the next two weeks.

Mr. Durst thanked administrators, faculty, and staff for going above and beyond to provide coverage and keep students safe.

Mr. Koors inquired about the current raises and what affect, if any, it had on the starting salaries of the various classes. Mr. Durst said the state is continuing to investigate this due to the significant compression issue. Until this issue is resolved, the state has granted the current increase.

Mr. Koors also asked about the bonuses outlined in the increased and if the school was restricted to how much money could be allocated to the bonuses. Mr. Durst replied that the school is restricted as the bonuses are tied to the school's budget. Mr. Durst explained that in the previous P4P (Pay for Performance) evaluation program, a percentage was given based on how well a staff member performed according to their evaluation. This percentage ended up being base building for all employees. This year the state is making the P4P a bonus, not base building. The state is looking seriously at providing cost of living increases going forward and making the P4P a bonus each year.

Mr. Durst informed the Board that the IBCF was able to secure a grant for \$50,000. The grant is to go specifically towards ISBVI hiring a consultant to help the technology team at the school develop a technology plan that:

- Allows the school to be able to track assistive technology.
- Develops a better evaluation process.
- Develops a plan for end-of-life cycles.
- Develops a plan to insure assistive technology.
- Develops a replacement plan.

The grant was identified to initially hire a consultant. The school had identified a person at the beginning of the school year, but the candidate fell through. ISBVI recently entered into a collaborative agreement with Moser Consulting. Moser has agreed to assume the responsibility for the assistive technology consulting role. This will benefit the school because rather than hiring one individual, the school will have access through Moser to four individuals that have expertise in areas needed. Mr. Durst asked for Board approval to move forward and spend the \$50,000 with Moser Consulting.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Ms. Botkin to approve spending \$50,000, from the grant dedicated to developing a plan for the school's technology, with Moser Consulting; motion carried.

V. New Business

A. Donations and Contributions (Attachments 5A, 5B, 5C & 6A, 6B, 6C)

Attachments 5A through 5C reflect Donations and Contributions under \$499 from October 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021 totaling \$891.05. Six donations were restricted and three were unrestricted. Attachment 5C totaled \$557.80 for the month of December.

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Botkin and seconded by Mr. Koors to approve donations from Attachment 5C over \$500.00; motion carried.

Attachments 6A through 6C reflect \$7,928.65 in Donations and Contributions over \$499 from October 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021. Two donations were restricted, and one was unrestricted.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Mr. Adams to approve donations in Attachment 6B over \$500; motion carried.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Mr. Adams to approve donations in Attachment 6C over \$500; motion carried.

The Board discussed sending a thank you for the generous donation for the Greenhouse roof.

B. Policy Review (Attachments 7, 8 & 9)

Changes and clarifications of code and websites were reviewed for Policy O-67, Bed Bug Policy.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Mr. Michaels to approve Attachment 7, the second review of Policy O-67; motion carried.

A change in code was reviewed for Policy S-05, Student Medications Policy.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Mr. Adams to approve Attachment 8, the second review of Policy S-05; motion carried.

A change in code was reviewed for Policy S-08, Behavior Intervention Policy.

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Botkin and seconded by Mr. Koors to approve Attachment 9, the second review of Policy S-08; motion carried.

C. 2nd Reading Policy O-71 Licensures/Certifications (Attachment 10)

Policy O-71 was designed to ensure that faculty and staff obtain, maintain, and keep current with any necessary and/or required licensures and certifications as required by the State of Indiana or ISBVI. No changes were made to the policy for the 2nd Reading.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Ms. Botkin to approve the second reading of Policy O-71; motion carried.

D. 2022 – 2023 School Calendar (Attachment 11)

This calendar is a mirror of Washington Township’s calendar and is similar to the current calendar. There are 180 instructional days and 190 contract days.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Ms. Botkin to approve the proposed 2022 – 2023 school calendar; motion carried.

E. Covid Update

Like many other schools in the state, ISBVI is experiencing a rise in numbers of individuals testing positive and an increase in the number of individuals quarantining due to contact tracing. On one given day, the school had thirteen education staff out quarantining. It is creating challenges, but staff have done an exceptional job in coverage. All staff have been filling in, at times performing multiple jobs, to ensure coverage and the safety of students. ISBVI wants to be able to provide in-person instruction; however, the school may find it necessary to go virtual in different areas of the school depending on how much numbers continue to rise.

VI. Public Comments:

No public comments.

VII. Board Comments:

Mr. Koors asked if students had missed school due to local transportation issues. Mr. Durst replied that this had not been an issue. Some students have been transported late due to the bus driver shortage but have been in attendance.

Mr. Adams and Mr. Kissling both commented that they are appreciative of all the effort being made to provide for the multi-faceted needs of the students.

VIII. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired School Board will be Monday, March 21, 2022 at 9:30am.

IX. Adjournment

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Ms. Botkin to adjourn the meeting at 10:35am; motion carried.