

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

ISBVI Board Meeting Minutes  
March 21, 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; 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 9:34am and took roll.

**II. Approval of Minutes** (Attachment 1)

The minutes from the January 24, 2022 (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.

### **III. Superintendent's Report**

#### A. School Update

##### **Elementary Report – Ms. Kennett**

The Elementary welcomed one new student since the last Board meeting in January. Students celebrated Random Acts of Kindness Day and Read Across America Week. During Read Across America Week, students enjoyed special guest readers, presented on the morning announcements, and ate Sues kabobs and green eggs and ham.

Two Elementary students participated in Braille Challenge. Both students placed in their respective age group.

Third-grade students have started the IREAD assessment.

##### **MS/HS Report – Mr. Wilson**

The MS/HS has had one new student since January.

Juniors took the SAT the week of March 7 as part of Graduation Pathways.

Seniors have taken the ISTEP retest for the final time.

Community Based Instructions will resume in the fourth quarter.

##### **Outreach Report – Ms. Hughes**

The department is serving approximately 310 students in 46 districts.

The Braille Challenge was held virtually on February 26. Eighteen students throughout the state participated. This year's theme was *Alice in Wonderland*. The event concluded with a tea party reception in the evening. The families gave positive feedback, and many of the students commented that they are looking forward to the time when the event can be held on campus.

Cane Quest was held virtually the following day, February 27, with nine students participating. Students performed their events at home then sent in a video detailing how they performed.

Summer Camps are back and have been scheduled. Camp Abilities (day camp) will be held June 20 – 24 and Expanding Your Horizons (overnight camp) will be June 26 – 30.

##### **Residential Services – Mr. Askren**

The department is looking into establishing yoga as a weekly activity in the evening for students.

There have been numerous adjustments and rearrangements with all sports seasons this school year. Goalball season will begin soon and end with a conference scheduled for the last weekend of April.

##### **Facilities Use – Mr. Brown**

Three teams are renting the track: St Luke's, IMSA, and the Washington Township Special Olympics. These teams will practice until the end of May.

Boy Scout Troop 621 will be having a campout on the lower April 22 – 24.

The Foundation for Fighting Blindness will hold their annual Vision Walk on campus on September 17, 2022.

## **Physical Plant – Mr. Malone**

The school has dealt with heat issues over the winter. Several pumps, pressure tanks, closed loop heat lines and steam lines have been replaced.

Churchman roof is near completion. A small portion of gutter work is all that remains.

The fourth stage of the tuck pointing project has been designed and is in the discussion stage.

Spring projects include:

Replacement of the E, F and G chiller. This is currently in the bid process and should start in April.

The Lambert roof project.

Replacement of the deaerator tank in the boiler house will take place in April.

### **B. Monthly Financial Statements (Attachments 2A & 2B)**

Attachment 2A is the monthly financial statement for January 31, 2022. At that point, the year was 59% over, Point One expenditures were at 55.42%, Points Two through Nine reflected 62.65% spent, and overall expenditures totaled 56.62%.

Attachment 2B, the monthly statement for February 28, 2022, reflected the year was 67% over, 67.37% spent from Point One and 66.95% spent from Points Two through Nine and overall expenditures for the month totaled 67.30%.

### **C. Staff Metrics (Attachment 3)**

Attachment 3 reflects the status of positions as of March 15, 2022, with 139 filled regular positions, 43 vacant regular positions, 11 filled intermittent positions and 26 vacant intermittent positions. Several new teaching jobs will be filled in the near future. The school is actively attempting to fill other open positions but is having a challenging time attracting candidates.

## **IV. New Business**

### **A. Donations and Contributions (Attachments 4A, 4B & 5A, 5B)**

Attachments 4A and 4B reflect Donations and Contributions under \$499 from January 1, 2022 to February 28, 2022 totaling \$110.00. Three donations were restricted, and one was unrestricted.

Attachments 5A and 5B reflect \$1,000.00 in Donations and Contributions over \$499 from January 1, 2022 to February 28, 2022. This was an unrestricted donation.

**Motion:** A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Ms. Botkin to approve donations in Attachment 5B over \$500; motion carried.

### **B. Revision Policy O-63 Nondiscrimination Policy (Attachment 6)**

The school has recently been assigned a new Human Resources officer, Katie White-Knartzer. This policy reflects the name change.

Mr. Michaels inquired about any steps that need to be taken if the party was not in agreement with the conclusion of the grievance.

Mr. Durst replied that the Nondiscrimination Policy is a state policy and channeled through a state grievance officer.

**Motion:** A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Mr. Adams to approve the Attachment 6 revision of Policy O-63; motion carried.

#### C. Teacher Salary Increase Schedule (Attachment 7)

In working with state personnel and the budget agency, the school has been able to develop a new, competitive teacher salary schedule. The issue in the past was a compression issue. For example, a teacher being hired presently with five years of experience was making significantly more, compared with a teacher that was hired five years ago with zero experience. The new schedule eliminates the compression issue. To ensure this, every biennium, along with the school's budget, Administration will revisit the salary schedule to see if there is any need for adjustments or revisions to continue to be competitive and improve recruitment and retention. The new schedule is currently set up where every year there should be a \$1,300 cost-of-living increase. The Pay for Performance (P4P), paid out previously as a percentage, will now be paid as a lump sum bonus as opposed to going toward the base salary. The budget impact will be \$380,000 for the entire year, with \$150,000 for the current year.

Mr. Koors inquired about when the increase will take effect and how the new schedule compares to the surrounding school corporations that ISBVI competes with.

Mr. Durst replied that the increase took effect in December and was paid out in the first paycheck in January. When comparing the new schedule with other districts, ISBVI was frequently higher.

#### D. New SPD Policies

The pandemic has been a challenging time to fill and retain positions not only at ISBVI but statewide. The state has taken the opportunity to step back and evaluate the situation and have come up with a number of policies and arrangements to make state jobs more attractive and aide in recruiting and retaining individuals.

##### Flexible Work Arrangements (Attachment 8)

This policy will give individuals, if appropriate based on their agency, the opportunity to work up to 15 hours a week remotely, ongoing.

##### Education Reimbursement (Attachment 9)

The state will reimburse costs for tuition and required course fees up to \$5,250 per calendar year. ISBVI has been fortunate enough to reimburse 80% of education costs for teachers who were going back to acquire their license in blind and low vision. This new policy will enable the state to cover 100% of the cost.

This policy will also cover reimbursement for other licensing requirements and required course fees for individuals working at the school as well. Approval from the state must be obtained prior to the enrollment of the course.

Mr. Kissling asked how these reimbursements would affect the ISBVI budget.

The discussion has not occurred yet as to how the state will provide the funds for reimbursements; however, Mr. Durst anticipates that ISBVI will have to exhaust its budget first and then the budget

agency will allow the school to move into reversion dollars in the future. He also anticipates that funds will be planned for in future bienniums to allow for these costs.

#### Referral Bonuses (Attachment 10)

A state employee could earn a cash reward when referring candidates to vacant positions within their employing agency.

\$500 for each referred candidate hired for a full-time position;

\$250 for each referred candidate hired for a part-time position; and

\$100 for each referred candidate hired for an intermittent position.

Cash awards are given after the referred candidate completes six months of employment.

#### WHOLE Employee Policy (Attachment 11)

Agencies will strive for high employee engagement, support health and wellness of state employees, and promote a culture of continuous improvement through learning and development. To further this policy objective, agencies may conduct activities utilizing state property and during compensable work hours consistent with this policy. Possibilities could include coaching, mentorships, job shadowing, rotational programs, employee engagement activities on and offsite such as assemblies, team meetings, team building events, celebrations, etc.

#### Community Service Leave (Attachment 12)

This allows individuals, with approval, to take up to 15 hours of paid leave per calendar year for voluntary community service, not to exceed 7.5 hours per event.

#### New Employee Leave, Re-Employing Retired State Employees, Bridge to Retirement (Attachment 13)

Vacation time for new hires is currently not available within the first six months of employment. The state has seen this can be a barrier to employment. To address this, state personnel will amend its rules to allow the use of vacation time by new employees upon accrual. In the interim, Governor Holcomb will issue an executive order that will temporarily credit new employees with up to 22.5 hours of personal leave available for use immediately consistent with the state's leave policies.

Retired state staff will be able to be rehired at the same salary upon retirement.

The bridge to retirement will allow agencies to double fill positions of long-term employees who have targeted a retirement date, enabling a more successful knowledge transfer between the retiring employee and their identified successor.

#### E. Co-location of Schools

The state has made the decision that ISBVI and ISD will be co-located on the current site of ISBVI. It will take approximately five years for this occur. Some buildings will be retained and majorly remodeled. Much of the campus will be raised. At this point there is a plan to maintain the pool. There have also been discussions to maintain the E, F and G buildings. As more information becomes available it will be shared. Projected cost is \$225,000,000 and has been allocated and approved for this project.

## F. Strategic Plan

It has been some time since the school has updated its strategic plan. Administrators feel it is prudent to revisit the plan to determine what revisions may be needed and utilize what continues to be valuable under the current plan.

Currently, the Indiana Blind Children's Foundation (IBCF) is also going through the development of a strategic plan with MAPT Solutions. The intent of the foundation is to support the mission and strategic plan of the school. Mr. Durst would like to move forward in hiring MAPT Solutions as well to ensure the two plans are co-developed. MAPT submitted a proposal to the school for \$25,000. The school currently has these funds in the budget. Mr. Durst asked for Board approval for these funds to be allocated to the development of the new strategic plan.

**Motion:** A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Mr. Adams to approve \$25,000 for MAPT Solutions for the development of a strategic plan; motion carried.

## G. Covid Update/Masking

Currently, there is no one on Covid restrictions and the school is below all protocols of quarantining. Many school districts have decided to make masks optional; however, ISBVI is still following its current mask protocol. The reasoning behind this being that mask protocols are driven by the number of Covid cases within the community in which the school is located. ISBVI is different in that there are local students as well as students that come from the far reaches of the state where Covid numbers are still high. The school will reevaluate after spring break. If numbers are still low, then the school will go mask optional when students return on Tuesday, April 19.

## H. Audit

The State Board of Accounts conducts an audit for each state agency. The last three years have been conducted virtually through emails and Teams meetings. This year the agency will perform the audit in person. The entrance meeting was held on Wednesday, March 9. The auditors have started to process and gather information such as bank accounts and statements. The process will take about three to four weeks with the exit meeting taking place mid-April.

## I. Accreditation

The school was due to go through an accreditation last year. Mr. Durst had requested, with Board approval, to postpone this based on Covid and how everything was materializing with the increase in Covid cases. The exception was granted by Cognia, and the school's status remained fully accredited. The school will go through a virtual accreditation May 18 – 20. ISBVI has been submitting the required information to Cognia in preparation for next month.

## **V. Public Comments:**

No public comments.

## **VI. Board Comments:**

Mr. Koors asked how graduation would be conducted. Mr. Durst replied that Administration is hopeful it will be somewhat back to normal but will be waiting to see what Covid numbers look like after spring break.

## **VII. Next Meeting**

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

## **VIII. Adjournment**

**Motion:** A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Mr. Kissling to adjourn the meeting at 10:38am; motion carried.