

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

ISBVI Board Meeting Minutes
August 28, 2023
9:30 a.m.

Members Present:

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

Members Not Present:

Mr. Tom Adams
Senator Liz Brown
Mr. Andy Cummings

Administration Present: Mr. Jim Durst, Superintendent; Mr. Raouf Estefanos, Assistant Superintendent of Business; Mr. Jay Wilson, Principal; Ms. Cara Burchett, Director of Outreach; Mr. Jason Askren, Director of Related Services; Mr. Dave Brown, Facilities Coordinator; Mr. Todd Malone, Physical Plant Director; Karen Keller, Secretary.

I. Call to Order

Board Chair, Mr. James Michaels, called the meeting to order at 9:31am and took roll.

II. Approval of Minutes (Attachment 1)

The minutes from the May 8, 2023 (Attachment 1) meeting were reviewed.

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

III. Superintendent's Report

A. School Update

Education Report – Mr. Wilson

Over the summer, three new teachers and one new teacher's aide joined the ISBVI staff. Carmen Breedlove taught for many years in Westfield schools and has joined the ISBVI staff as the Horticulture teacher. Shawn Humphrey is ISBVI's new Media Specialist and previously taught within Hamilton Southeastern Schools. Dr. Ann Alvar is teaching HS Science for ISBVI and has many years of experience in research. Margie Krizic comes to ISBVI with extensive health care experience and is working in the Elementary as a teaching assistant.

The school has two new students in Elementary and seven in MS/HS.

Six students participated in a virtual cooking class with Christine Ha, the first blind contestant and Season 3 winner of MasterChef.

Life Skills classes had an opportunity to attend the state fair last week.

NWEA testing has begun for all grade levels and will be complete in two weeks. Elementary reading assessments have started as well.

Tactile Engineering met with staff on the Cadence full-page braille display. The school has 10 units on campus for student use.

Grades 3 – 5 will have an overnight education experience at Flat Rock August 30 – 31. Camp Allendale will be coming to campus on August 30 to provide a camp-like experience for younger Elementary students.

Related Services – Mr. Askren

Residential has hired three new Residential Mentors since the last Board meeting. Kelly Pippens is working 2nd shift and has experience at IU Health. Tony Williams is working 3rd shift. He comes to ISBVI from the prosthetics field. Elesia Whitfield has started on the 2nd shift and has several years of experience working with developmentally disabled individuals.

Dietary recently hired Linda Allen. Linda has 18 years of experience working with students.

Curtis Burroughs, formerly with the Dietary Department, is transferring to Residential.

Residential housed students in H and I dorms for the STEP program June 12 – 30. The program was a success and students enjoyed the many evening activities offered.

Members of the Lions stayed in Houses 140 and 160 during the state fair.

Track season has begun and is off to a successful start with over 20 participants. The first track meet will be at ISBVI on September 7.

Dave Brown is now serving as ISBVI's Athletic Director.

Mr. Michaels shared positive remarks about the group of students that participated in STEP, as well as the staff that was there to support students in their experience. He also noted that many participants were not ISBVI students. Because of this, they were able to experience ISBVI and see what it has to offer.

Outreach Report – Ms. Burchett

Outreach has seven full-time consultants and two O&M specialists for the 2023 – 2024 school year. They are serving close to 300 students this year in 40 districts.

Over the summer, Outreach held its annual Expanding Your Horizons (EYH) Camp. Through the generosity and support of its sponsors, ISBVI and the IBCF, the school was able to host an overnight camp with 19 campers. Campers participated in a variety of activities such as tie-dyeing, canoeing,

rockwall climbing, a high ropes course, and other team building activities. Additionally, Camp Abilities was held the following week and had 10 campers. This camp is based off a curriculum out of Brockport, New York. Students participated in track and field, goalball, 5-A-side soccer, beep baseball and were able to take trips to the Monon Water Park and the Sports Legend exhibit at the Children's Museum. The department is in the process of planning the first L.E.A.D.S. Course for the upcoming school year. The theme throughout the course will be "Let the Adventure Begin." It's anticipated that there will be 10 – 12 participants. In addition to the L.E.A.D.S. Course, Outreach will also offer a LEAP into L.E.A.D.S. Course for students who are elementary age. The course will be based on the same premise as the initial L.E.A.D.S. Course but will be geared towards elementary-aged students.

Facilities Use – Mr. Brown

RHI Sports is once again holding practices for its wheelchair basketball league in the main gym once a month during the school year.

The Foundation Fighting Blindness will be holding their annual Vision Walk on campus the morning of Saturday, September 9. The Lions will be holding their annual Brian's Tike Race the same day later in the morning/early afternoon. The groups are hoping to collaborate since they will all be on campus.

Physical Plant – Mr. Malone

Riley Schwedler is the newest member of the Maintenance team. He comes to ISBVI with customer service experience and is proving to be a strong worker with good mechanical inclination.

The new chiller in E, F, and G is working well and keeping buildings cool and comfortable.

A compressor was replaced in the air conditioning system for the Auditorium.

There is a new motor and controls in the air handling system in the Elementary.

Six new chiller coils and a new steam coil have been replaced in various air handling units over the campus.

The Activities Building had a new air compressor installed.

The phase 4 tuckpointing project at the apple tunnel took place over the summer. The road has been repaved and once contractors lay new cement and seed the area, it will be complete. Work for this same project included repairs made to the Powerhouse ceiling, new pit covers near the Laundry building, and various repairs in areas between the steam tunnel and main buildings.

Roof and masonry work was completed on the Laundry building.

The Aquatic Center repairs have been delayed due to the time-consuming casting process to replace the medallions.

A few renovations to the independent houses were also completed over the summer.

B. Monthly Financial Statements (Attachments 2A, 2B & 2C)

Attachment 2A is the monthly financial statement for May 31, 2023. At that point, the year was 92% over, Point One expenditures were at 98.66%, Points Two through Nine reflected 83.36% spent, and overall expenditures totaled 95.92%. In Preventative Maintenance (PM), 93.63% of the allotment had been spent.

Attachment 2B, the FY23 year-end statement, reflects 100% spent from Point One, 84.64% spent from Points Two through Nine, and overall expenditures totaling 97.39%. The allotment for Point One was adjusted with an additional \$627,495.00 to account for actual salary increases during FY23 which were not allotted during the year. The budget agency added just enough to make Point One \$0.00.

Attachment 2C is the monthly financial statement for July 31, 2023. At that point, the year was 8.5% over, Point One expenditures were at 5.35%, Points Two through Nine reflected 72.89%, and overall expenditures totaled 22.99%. In addition, 4.82% had been spent from the PM budget.

Point One increased to \$10,746,166.10 to account for a full year of the new salaries. Point Three includes the \$2,000,000.00 for the Tactile Engineering pilot project. The total allotment for FY24 is \$14,544,847.00 with a 2% reversion of \$296,834.00. The allotment for Preventative Maintenance was increased to \$779,501.97.

C. Staff Metrics (Attachment 3A, 3B & 3C)

Attachment 3A reflects the status of positions as of May 31, 2023, with 143 filled regular positions, 41 vacant regular positions, 10 filled intermittent positions and 25 vacant intermittent positions. The filled intermittent positions are primarily Residential Mentors and Substitute Teachers.

Attachment 3B, the report for June 30, 2023, reflects 142 filled regular positions, 42 vacant regular positions, 10 filled intermittent positions and 25 vacant intermittent positions.

The report for July 31, 2023, reflects 144 filled regular positions, 40 vacant regular positions, 12 filled intermittent positions and 23 vacant intermittent positions.

IV. New Business

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

Attachments 4A, 4B and 4C reflect Donations and Contributions under \$499 from May 1, 2023, to July 31, 2023, totaling \$368.00. Six donations were restricted and five were unrestricted.

Attachments 5A, 5B and 5C reflect Donations and Contributions over \$499 from May 1, 2023, to July 31, 2023, totaling \$112,963.63. Five donations were restricted and two were unrestricted.

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Botkin and seconded by Mr. Bridwell to approve donations over \$500; motion carried.

A small group of staff and students will be traveling to Washington D.C. in October made possible through a grant with the IBCF.

B. Promethean Boards/Laptops

Thirteen promethean boards were received and all but six have been deployed. Of the 160 laptops and 21 embossers purchased, half were deployed to teachers and education staff and training was provided. All new technology has prepared the school staff for any eventuality. The laptops will allow users to function from any location, which will be beneficial in the upcoming relocation.

C. New Phone System

The licensing for the current phone system has been extended to November due to challenges in finding a carrier that can provide the school's phone number service and work with the state on the terms within its addendum.

Once the school is able to acquire a carrier and move off site, the phone system will be able to be utilized in both relocation sites. The switchboard operator will be able to transfer calls to all ISBVI staff

regardless of where they are located within the two schools. The bell and intercom systems are portable as well.

D. Co-location of Schools

The providers, Ratio and American Structurepoint, have done a nice job listening to all constituencies in terms of the school's needs. They are currently in the design stage for all buildings and spaces.

ISBVI will move off campus at the end of the 2023 – 2024 school year. The school will be leasing two schools, IPS Schools 83 and 94. Students that are housed in the dorms will be housed at ISD. The school is working through logistics, such as transportation and staffing. Administration is being proactive by meeting with State Personnel about staffing ratios and State Surplus to see what can be discarded and what can be sent to surplus.

The current moving plan is for the IERC to move to School 83 after the first of the year, followed by Outreach and the IBCF prior to the end of the school year. An additional goal is that everything remaining in the school by the end of the school year will primarily be items that will be moved to the new locations. All other items that are going to be discarded, going to surplus or items that are being kept and stored until the completion of the new campus, will already be moved to the appropriate locations.

Mr. Bridwell asked if there were intentional plans being made to stay connected to the three groups after the moves.

Mr. Durst replied that the school will function more like the local townships as there will be travel between sites to stay connected. Times will also be set for regular visits to 94 for various members of staff including payroll and HR.

E. Strategic Plan (Attachments 6A & 6B)

ISBVI spent the last 12-18 months working with MAPT Solutions in developing a 5-year strategic plan. MAPT listened to the school's request to make the plan constituent-driven and not administration-driven. The plan is complete and is being submitted to the Board for approval.

MAPT identified four strategic goals with supporting strategies for each (Attachment 6A). The school is also working with MAPT for a communication plan and a rebranding plan in the interim until ISBVI returns to the campus in five years. Attachment 6B is a Year 1 Operational Plan developed to help the school be intentional in its focus for the first few years, given all of the upcoming changes.

Mr. Michaels asked if the plan included a graduation rate goal. Mr. Durst replied that it does not, but anticipates that improvement will be seen as ISBVI focuses on providing the supports and services that are deliberately outlined within the plan.

Discussion was held on current graduation rates. These numbers can be skewed as the DOE only allows four years to attain diplomas. Mr. Rhodes will look into providing the Board with overall graduation rates for individuals who are blind or have low vision and how the rates are calculated.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Bridwell and seconded by Mr. Koors to approve the proposed strategic plan; motion carried.

F. Tactile Engineering

ISBVI has been working with Dave Schleppenbach and Tactile Engineering (TE) on the pilot program for the Cadence, a refreshable braille display that also does tactile graphics. Indiana is the first state to adopt this technology and this project has the capability to make Indiana a leader in educating children with visual impairments.

Dave brought a Cadence to let Board members see and touch the device to gain a better understanding of what it can do. The Cadence is a modular device that is close in size and weight to an iPhone. Instead of having a screen to view, pixels slide up and down to make dots that simulate braille, graphics, or animation. It's used in the same way a sighted person would use a phone or tablet and is designed to integrate into all areas of the student's life:

- 1) Classroom Education – These devices would be especially helpful for subjects such as math, science, and engineering. The devices may be connected in groups up to four to make larger screens for charts, maps, and atlases.
- 2) Workforce, Job, and College Preparedness – TE is speaking to Ivy Tech and other universities in Indiana to form collaborations to allow this technology to follow students in their next steps.
- 3) Social/Life Aspect – The Cadence could be connected to a microwave or a washing machine that is IoT enabled to assist with independent living skills, could allow a student to play games with their colleagues, or communicate with parents.

Deployment for the Cadence started this semester. Teachers were able to use the device for a meteorology lesson and witnessed how receptive students were to this type of learning.

TE has also formed a partnership with Savvas Learning that will allow textbooks that ISBVI adopts in the future to be synced up with the Cadence and be available immediately to students, much in the same way a sighted student in a public school would have immediate access to Indiana's digital portal via a Chromebook.

In addition, TE is also partnering with NASA to train the next generation of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics learners. NASA is particularly interested in students with disabilities, as these students do not traditionally pursue STEM fields. NASA is experiencing a shortage of people with technical skills and by mining populations that are generally underrepresented in these areas, this is one way to help fill these shortages. To showcase the unique abilities of this device, there is a project being planned at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway for the upcoming total solar eclipse in April where people may come to view the eclipse. For those children with visual impairments, a high-altitude balloon watch will be done with telemetry on the balloon during the eclipse. As the balloon goes up to the fringes of space, it will report data in real time, which can be controlled by the students on the tablet. A dry run of this will be done in October near the partial solar eclipse and will be an opportunity for the kids to participate with sighted students during the event.

Mr. Durst informed the Board that the school has been allocated two million dollars for both FY2023 and FY2024 for this pilot project. Board approval was requested to move forward with this project utilizing the two million for each year except for possibly withholding of 2% for the school's reversion. The project has been approved by the Office of Technology, the State Budget Agency, the Department of Administration, and the Office of the Attorney General. The school will be following the specific

requirements as to how the funds may be spent and the Administration will keep the Board informed on the expenditures for this project.

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Botkin and seconded by Mr. Koors to approve moving forward with the Cadence project and spending up to the two million per fiscal year (minus 2% for the reversion) for 2023 and 2024 allocated for the project; motion carried.

G. Addendum to Agenda: Indiana Code 20-21-2-4

This code specifically identifies the credentials for the position of the ISBVI Superintendent. As other schools have sought to replace Superintendents with departures and/or retirements, they have experienced extreme difficulty attracting candidates due to some of the required credentials. Based on these difficulties, he recommended one change in Section 4, qualification 4 that currently states:

Meet the qualifications for an Indiana teacher's certificate in the area of visual impairment disabilities.

Mr. Durst asked the Board's consideration in making item 4 a preferred requirement rather than a mandatory requirement. This change will allow the school to attract additional candidates and will also give the Board the flexibility to consider candidates with or without the certificate.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Bridwell and seconded by Ms. Botkin to approve making Item 4, Section 4 of the qualifications of the ISBVI Superintendent a preferred requirement.

V. Public Comments:

No public comments.

VI. Board Comments:

No Board comments.

VII. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired School Board will be Monday, October 23, 2023, at 9:30am.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Bridwell and seconded by Mr. Koors to adjourn the meeting at 10:37am; motion carried.