

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

ISBVI Board Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2023
9:30 a.m.

Members Present:

Mr. James Michaels, Chair
Ms. Kathy Botkin, Vice Chair
Mr. Tom Adams
Mr. Michael Bridwell
Mr. Andy Cummings
Mr. Don Koors
Mr. Patrick Rhodes

Members Not Present:

Mr. John Kissling
Senator Liz Brown

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

I. Call to Order

Board Chair, Mr. James Michaels, called the meeting to order at 9:31am and took roll. Mr. Michaels introduced two new board members. Michael Bridwell is the parent of an ISBVI graduate. Andy Cummings, currently with Ivy Tech, formerly worked for the State Budget Agency in the Education Division where ISBVI was a part of his portfolio.

II. Approval of Minutes (Attachment 1)

The minutes from the January 23, 2023 (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

School Report – Mr. Wilson

New teacher, Haley Yost, was introduced to the board. Ms. Yost is teaching the combined 2nd and 3rd grade class.

The IREAD assessment has been taking place for the last two weeks.

In addition, juniors took the SAT on March 1st.

The next assessment, ILEARN, will take place in April.

Agape therapeutic horseback riding continues for elementary students through a grant made possible by the IBCF. Middle School classes will be attending in April and May.

Two new elementary students have started since the January board meeting.

Education is in the process of hiring residential mentors.

Life skills students and the student council participated in Indy Fuel Hockey in Education on February 28th.

The VIP luncheon held in the elementary on February 14 was well attended by family and guests.

Related Services – Mr. Askren

Mr. Durst informed the board that Mr. Askren was recently promoted and reassigned to the Director of Related Services which includes Residential Services, Compliance and Safety, the Health Center and Dietary. Mr. Askren also continues to serve as the Athletic Director.

New hires since the last meeting in January include Walter Goodwin, Charlene Tyrone, and Andrane Jones in Residential, Jessica Stillwell in Health Services, and Curtis Burroughs in Dietary.

The school's first bowling season was successfully completed and was highly popular among students. Five other schools for the blind were able to offer bowling this year. Staff will work to expand the program for next year with in-person and conference meets.

Swim and Forensics season is currently underway. Staff and students are excited, as this is the first year of swimming since the spring of 2019.

An Ivy Tech student has been working with students on culinary skills during the school day and has also volunteered her time in the evening to work on these skills in the dorm as well. The program has been extended to the end of the semester.

Hoosiers Out on Tandems (HOOTS) will be on campus for a ride with students on May 15.

Outreach Report – Ms. Kennett

Outreach consultants continue to provide blind/low vision services to over 300 students and 46 districts. The Braille Challenge and Cane Quest Regional Competitions, which were held on Saturday, January 28 and Sunday, January 29 were a huge success. This year's theme was *Where the Wild Things Are*. There were 23 participants from ISBVI and districts around the state. While students were testing, parents were in different sessions including:

- a networking activity where parents were provided with a plethora of different resources and information about the ECC;
- a "trail mix" where parents had to use a braille key to follow a recipe written in braille;

- family craft activities and;
- library resources provided by the IERC.

The Outreach Department held its 3rd L.E.A.D.S. Course, “Confident with Compensatory”, March 15 – 17. Nine students participated in this course, two of which were new. Students learned about the importance of learning and how they are the “I in IEP”. They also gained a more comprehensive understanding of their eye conditions and educational implications, all while working on communication and expression skills. Students in the program arrive on Tuesday evenings and attend the program Wednesday through Friday.

VIEWPOINT Art Showcase is a new Outreach initiative. VIEWPOINT is a showcase to celebrate artwork by Indiana students who are blind or visually impaired. It is not a contest, rather a celebration. The exhibition will be presented as a virtual online gallery with image descriptions and student artist’s statements. After collecting the artwork, it will be sent to the APH conference.

Facilities Use – Mr. Brown

RHI Sports held their final basketball practice in the gym over the weekend.

Three track teams are currently renting the track for practice throughout the week: St. Luke’s, IMSA and Special Olympics. Their practices will conclude at the end of May.

The 2023 VisionWalk through the Foundation for Fighting Blindness will be held on campus September 9, 2023.

Physical Plant – Mr. Malone

Mr. Malone introduced two new staff members to the board. Jason Schwedler has joined ISBVI as a steam plant operator and Mark Costlow comes to the school as the Maintenance Supervisor.

Lambert and Wilson roofs were completed over the summer. There are a few small leaks from nails on the Wilson roof that will be repaired.

The E, F and G chiller is in place and the contractor is now working on hooking it to power.

Phase four tuck-pointing is scheduled to begin after school ends. Areas included in phase four are laundry, the utility tunnel, the garage, and part of the aquatic center.

The fuel pump project to remove the underground storage tanks and replace with above ground tanks is on hold.

The HVAC in the aquatic center is on hold as well.

Engineering firms are on the grounds conducting boring for soil testing, as well as locating underground utilities campus-wide.

Maintenance is currently interviewing for a Clerical Assistant and a Maintenance 3 position. A Maintenance Repair 2 candidate will be starting soon.

Over Spring Break, repairs will be made to areas of flooring and walls from water damage.

Mowing will begin soon around campus.

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

Attachment 2A is the monthly financial statement for January 31, 2023. At that point, the year was 59% over, Point One expenditures were at 64.63%, Points Two through Nine reflected 68.79% spent, and overall expenditures totaled 65.38%.

Attachment 2B, the monthly financial statement for February 28, 2023, reflects 73.82% spent from Point One, 73.07% spent from Points Two through Nine and overall expenditures totaling 73.68%. At that point the year was 67% over. The Preventative Maintenance (PM) balance was \$22,885.31 which was less than 7% of the PM allotment. (See Item B under New Business below)

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

Attachment 3A reflects the status of positions as of January 31, 2023, with 140 filled regular positions, 43 vacant regular positions, 10 filled intermittent positions and 27 vacant intermittent positions. Attachment 3B reports that as of February 28, 2023, the school had 142 filled regular positions, 41 vacant regular positions, 9 filled intermittent positions and 28 vacant intermittent positions. The school continues to fill as many positions as possible to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of students.

Mr. Bridwell inquired about the recent salary increases and if they had helped with staff retention. Mr. Durst replied that it had made a significant difference in retention. Recruitment is still a challenge.

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, 2023, to February 28, 2023, totaling \$941.75. Five donations were restricted, and twelve were unrestricted.

Attachments 5A and 5B reflect Donations and Contributions over \$499 from January 1, 2023, to February 28, 2023, totaling \$58,610.00. Two donations were restricted, and one was unrestricted.

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

Mr. Michaels inquired about the current screen reading program in use.

Mr. Durst reported that the school is using JAWS. He also informed the board that the school is in the process of reevaluating assistive technology across the board. In the past, there have been a wide range of braille devices in use such as BrailleTouches, Braille Lites, and BrailleNotes to name a few. If a classroom has five or six braille students, each using a different braille device, and a device fails or has issues, it's nearly impossible for the teacher to have expertise for all devices in use.

Because of this, the school is moving in the direction of using laptops and iPads with refreshable braille devices. Making this change would also ensure continuity of delivery. In addition, it would prepare students for their next steps after graduation as many former braille proficient students have informed the school that once entering college, laptops and screen readers have primarily been used.

Mr. Wilson added that Vocational Rehab is much more likely to purchase laptops with refreshable braille as opposed to a \$6,000 - \$7,000 BrailleNote Touch Plus.

B. Preventative Maintenance (Attachment 6)

The total allotment for the current FY is \$11,397,326 with no required reversion.

In August 2022, a new pay scale for teachers was implemented which resulted in a \$388,000 budget impact.

In November 2022, the new comp study for all state employees was approved which increased individuals' annual salary anywhere between 5% to 35%, with an annual budget impact of \$922,157 for a full year. Since this increase started in November, the budget impact for the current fiscal year was only \$602,949.

The total estimated budget impact for the current year for these two increases is \$990,949. The State Budget Agency will adjust the allotment near the end of the fiscal year based on the actual budget impact, not to exceed the estimated amount.

In December 2022, two Admin Actions to move money were requested:

- The first Admin Action was for moving \$50,000 from a completed project to a new project to cover boiler replacement in the Aquatic Center.
- The second Admin Action was for moving \$167,410 from Point One to Point Three to cover expenses that were originally accounted for in Point One; these expenses were as follows:
 - \$105,130 to outsource boiler operators to cover the night shift for three months;
 - \$49,280 for a part time dietitian for a year; and
 - \$13,000 for an intermittent Nurse Practitioner for a year.

FY23 has had many challenges requiring higher than usual expenditures of the PM budget:

- 41.95% Heating and Cooling Repairs
The heating/cooling challenges were discussed with the State Budget Agency and an additional Admin Action is being processed to move \$94,176 from a completed project to a new project to be used to cover eight items of PM expenditures. PM funds remaining after this move will be 27% for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Mr. Bridwell asked about the criteria established on how to spend PM dollars during the school's transition.

Mr. Durst responded saying that there is no protocol established; however, the school has assured the State Budget Agency that requests would not be made for anything that is not a necessity for the next year. A number of previous requests have been placed on hold, such as the HVAC in the Aquatic Center.

C. Promethean Boards/Laptops

Twenty promethean boards have been installed and are being well utilized in classrooms. Eventually Google Play and other accessibility features will be available to enhance what teachers are doing in the classroom.

The laptops have been delivered to the school and IT is working on a distribution schedule. These will ensure that the school is prepared when remote learning is necessary.

Laptops for students are rugged models that should hold up well. ISBVI is also working closely with David Schleppebach at Tactile Engineering on a new refreshable braille device.

D. Co-location of Schools

The companies have done an exceptional job interviewing constituencies and are in the design phase of the process. A town hall meeting was held last fall, and another is anticipated soon. A decision that will need to be made in the near future is whether to remain on campus or move off campus during the build. There is a strong drive to relocate during the build for safety reasons as well as cost and time savings.

E. Strategic Plan

Administration has been working with MAPT Solutions on the development of the five-year strategic plan. MAPT has identified a rough plan that will continue to be tweaked in the next month. Once finalized, it will be presented.

Staff are attempting to build the unknown co-location initiative into the plan as well.

The school's last plan had items listed that are still relevant such as ISBVI would strive to be a hub and provide virtual instruction.

The new plan also seriously takes into consideration the possibility of ISBVI providing school year-round and providing more STEM initiatives. ISBVI has found the local school corporations struggle with STEM subjects. It is the school's hope in the future that students at local schools will be able to take advantage of the expertise at ISBVI by attending virtually during the school year or over the summer to gain credits in STEM areas.

V. Public Comments:

No public comments.

VI. Board Comments:

Mr. Bridwell expressed thanks for serving on the board.

VII. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired School Board will be Monday, May 8, 2023, at 9:30am.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Adams and seconded by Mr. Bridwell to adjourn the meeting at 10:16am; motion carried.