



# Indiana School for the Blind & Visually Impaired

ESTABLISHED 1847

ISBVI Board Meeting  
Monday, January 27, 2025, at 9:30am  
School 83  
5050 E. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46226

## MINUTES

### **Members Present:**

Michael Bridwell, Chair  
Don Koors, Vice Chair  
Matt Butler  
Andy Cummings  
John Kissling  
Adam Rodenbeck  
Jennifer Spencer  
Julie Thacker

### **Members Not Present:**

Senator Liz Brown

**Administration Present:** James Michaels, Superintendent; Raouf Estefanos, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations; Jay Wilson, Principal; Cara Burchett, Director of Outreach; Jason Askren, Director of Related Services; Todd Malone, Physical Plant Director; Karen Keller, Secretary.

### **I. Call to Order**

Board Chair, Michael Bridwell, called the meeting to order at 9:30am and took roll.

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

The minutes from the October 21, 2024, meeting were reviewed. Mr. Bridwell requested to note in the minutes that the Braille Challenge and Cane Quest events were postponed and did not take place January 25-26. Tuck-pointing for the Powerhouse, Maintenance garage, and the Laundry building was discussed. These buildings will remain on the campus. The remaining funds from this capital project will be used to correct issues.

**Motion:** A motion was made by Mr. Rodenbeck and seconded by Mr. Butler to approve the minutes as amended; motion carried.

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

#### **A. School Update**

##### **Education Report – Mr. Wilson**

The Holiday Program was a success, and many parents were able to attend.

Piano students performed at the Star Luncheon for students, staff, and guests. Many thanks to the Lions who helped serve the meal.

Two new teaching assistants started in December: Lori Stear and Trish Thomas. Darla Rampersaud has joined staff as a substitute teacher. Tankgwa Sturgill is student teaching for the second semester.

ISBVI has welcomed 6 new students this semester.

Middle School ski trips will take place for the next four weeks, made possible by funding through the IBCF.

The TOCAF grant has funded live music performances for students. One took place in December and another performance will be scheduled for the first quarter of the year. The performances will center around reading and math.

Spring testing for WIDA, IAM, IREAD, and ILEARN will be starting in January.

Mr. Humphrey will be taking students to a local Make48 competition.

ISBVI will be participating in the Million Meal Marathon at Gainbridge Fieldhouse in February.

Directory of IT, Jeff Frownfelter, shared information on the PowerSchool breach that took place in late December/early January. PowerSchool is the student information database used by ISBVI. PowerSchool notified the school that their system had been breached and would let the school know if data from ISBVI was included. ISBVI notified parents to inform them of what was known about the breach. Since the initial notification, PowerSchool confirmed that ISBVI was one of the many schools that were exposed. The school is currently working on a letter to send to staff and parents giving more information about the exposure and options that PowerSchool will be extending to protect the data of those exposed by the breach.

##### **Outreach Report – Ms. Burchett**

Outreach consultants continue to provide blind/low vision services to over 300 students from around the state. Staff continue to explore ways to reach more students and districts.

The L.E.A.D.S Course continues to benefit students from around the state. Between November and December each level (elementary, middle/high school and transition) held sessions. Second semester sessions will have returning students and several new students as well. An abundance of positive feedback regarding the different courses has been received.

The Outreach Department is diligently working to prepare for its annual Braille Challenge and Cane Quest Regional Competitions. This year's literature-inspired theme is "The Little Engine That Could". There will be 24 Braille Challenge participants and 19 Cane Quest participants. Braille Challenge is a program of the Braille Institute, which is in Los Angeles where the devastating wildfires have been occurring. Since ISBVI's competition is the regional qualifier for the national Braille Challenge, the school can only hold its contests using official tests from the Braille Institute. Due to the ongoing situation, ISBVI has postponed its events and are hoping to reschedule for February.

##### **Related Services – Mr. Askren**

Residential recently welcomed Briana Jones to its staff. Briana will be serving students on the 3<sup>rd</sup> shift.

The Mobile Dentist came to school on November 6.

CPI Training was completed for all Residential Mentors on November 25.

The school hosted the annual Thanksgiving Luncheon on November 21 and the Star Luncheon on December 16.

A Flu Clinic was held for staff on December 11.

A Low Vision clinic will be conducted by IU Optometry on campus January 28.

The Student Center opened at School 94 on January 13.

Healthy snacks are being offered to staff and students to promote wellness.

Students performed well at the Goalball Conference. Boys placed 2<sup>nd</sup> and girls placed 8<sup>th</sup>.

The wrestling and cheer teams competed at conference over the weekend. Wrestlers placed 4<sup>th</sup> and had many individual medals. The cheer team performed well and persevered despite a team member's last-minute injury.

### **Physical Plant – Mr. Malone**

Most of the renovation projects at 94 are complete or near completion. The remaining items needed to complete the Health Center shower renovation are flooring, coat base, and lighting. Work in the courtyard has also taken place including the sealing of pavement, tree trimming and removal, and the installation of a small greenhouse. The school is currently looking into playground equipment for the area as well.

ISBVI Maintenance staff continue to provide snow removal.

Five new Chevy Impalas have been added to the Outreach fleet. The vehicles Outreach was previously using will now be available for academic use.

Two full-size Chevy trucks have been added to the Maintenance fleet. A snowplow and salt bin are being installed on one of the trucks.

Demolition continues at the College Avenue campus. Most of the peripheral buildings are down.

Mr. Malone will be retiring on February 14, 2025. Mr. Michaels took a moment to thank Mr. Malone for his years of service at the school.

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

Attachment 2A is the monthly financial statement for October 31, 2024. At that point, the year was 34% complete, Point One expenditures were at 33.67%, Points Two through Nine reflected 85.97% spent, and overall expenditures totaled 47.33%. In Preventative Maintenance (PM), 7.36% of the allotment had been spent. The remaining balance of the allotment was \$7,660,292.25.

Attachment 2B, the statement as of November 30, 2024, reflects 42% of the year completed, 41.62% spent from Point One, 93.51% spent from Points Two through Nine, and overall expenditures totaling 55.17%. In PM, 7.68% had been spent. The remaining balance of the allotment was \$6,519,782.78.

The financial statement for December 31, 2024, Attachment 2C, reflects 50% of the year completed, 50.76% spent from Point One, 95.04% spent from Points Two through Nine, and overall expenditures totaling 62.33%. In PM, 7.890% had been spent. The remaining balance of the allotment was \$5,479,711.11.

This fiscal year has brought unique challenges due to the expenses related to the temporary locations and the establishment of new operations. Key costs include \$246,000 in lease expenses and \$83,000 for daily student transportation from ISD dorms to School 94 totaling \$329,000 that was not accounted for in the school's budget. These are not the only additional expenses, but they are the most significant ones tied to the move and new operations. These expenses have caused Point Three to exceed projections, negatively impacting the allotment in Point Two and Point Nine.

On a positive note, Preventative Maintenance spending has decreased significantly since the school is no longer maintaining the College Avenue campus. To address these financial pressures, the school has requested the budget agency to release the 2% reversion of \$296,834.00 to help cover the majority of the additional costs for FY25.

For the next biennium budget, the school is exploring its options to meet the governor's directives to achieve the 5% budget reduction.

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

Mr. Michaels introduced new staff member, Nick Leon. Mr. Leon is the school's Assistant Director of Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC).

Attachment 3A reflects the status of positions as of October 31, 2024, with 128 filled regular positions, 56 vacant regular positions, 11 filled intermittent positions and 24 vacant intermittent positions.

Attachment 3B, the report for November 30, 2024, reflects 130 filled regular positions, 54 vacant regular positions, 11 filled intermittent positions and 24 vacant intermittent positions.

The report as of December 31, 2024, Attachment 3C, reflects 134 filled regular positions, 50 vacant regular positions, 10 filled intermittent positions and 25 vacant intermittent positions.

The state is working with the school to ensure that much needed residential mentor positions are filled as soon as possible.

### **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 October 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024, totaling \$619.18. All seven donations were restricted.

Attachments 5A, 5B, and 5C reflect \$0.00 in Donations and Contributions over \$499 from October 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024.

#### B. 2025 – 2026 School Calendar (Attachment 6)

ISBVI's start date will coincide with the Indiana State Fair, however, the school is not anticipating any housing issues. ISD campus police assisted ISBVI at the start of the current school year, ensuring that traffic flow and safety needs were met.

**Motion:** A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Ms. Thacker to approve the 2025 – 2026 school calendar; motion carried.

### C. Policy O-63 Revised Nondiscrimination Policy (Attachment 7)

Changes were made to this policy to reflect the change in superintendents and the new address of the school.

**Motion:** A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Mr. Rodenbeck to approve Policy O-63 as amended; motion carried.

### D. Emergency Preparedness Plan School 83 (Attachment 8)

The plan outlines emergency procedures and evacuation routes for the building. The format is similar to School 94's plan. Students are starting to travel to School 83 for ECC classes. Instruction will take place at the beginning of each class to ensure students are familiar with procedures for School 83.

The drill schedule for School 94 includes fire drills held once/month, tornado/inclement weather drills held once/semester, and intruder drills held once/semester. Evaluations are completed after each event and reports are turned in to the Indianapolis Fire Department. ISBVI will be following up to ensure that the fire department has floor plans for both School 83 and 94.

**Motion:** A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Mr. Cummings to approve the emergency preparedness plan as presented for School 83; motion carried.

### E. Culinary Arts Kitchen Construction

Laura Alvarado, Executive Director of the Indiana Blind Children's Foundation (IBCF), reported that the Culinary Arts Kitchen is 99% complete. A new countertop needs to be cut and placed on a shelving unit. Fire safety and first aid kits will be delivered this week as well as adaptive accessories such as braille and bump dots. Until a teacher is secured, the foundation is working to line up local visiting chefs for the program. This is the first kitchen of its kind in the state and possibly, the country. The IBCF is working with the press to share this information with the public.

The foundation has been partnering with Dick's Sporting Goods to provide four separate dates of skiing lessons to students at Perfect North Slopes.

The IBCF No Limits Celebration featuring advocate and performer, Lachi, will take place March 1 at the Schrott Center for the Performing Arts at Butler University.

In conjunction with the statewide gaps analysis, a team visited the Arizona Schools for the Blind and Deaf as well as their Foundation for Blind Children and Saavi Services for the Blind in January. Team members included Laura Alvarado, James Michaels, Cara Burchett, and Nick Leon. The trip provided the opportunity to learn from other schools that have collocated and learn how their foundations function. The team was inspired by some of the innovative programs taking place in Arizona. The team will also be visiting the Alabama and Florida schools.

## **V. Public Comments:**

No public comments.

## **VI. Board Comments:**

Mr. Butler asked about the progress between the school and IOT with the address and search engine optimization. In checking recently, Mr. Frownfelter discovered that ISBVI's address at School 94 is showing

but School 83 has dropped off and is showing as the IBCF. The school will be needing additional help to correct this.

Mr. Koors asked when the state will be finalizing a plan for the design of the new schools. Mr. Michaels let the board know that meetings are continuing to take place to develop the plans. The IDOA has commented that the state should be able to present plans soon.

## **VII. Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting is Monday, March 17, 2025, at 9:30am at School 83.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

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