



Indiana School for the  
Blind & Visually Impaired  
ESTABLISHED 1847

ISBVI Board Meeting  
Monday, March 17, 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  
Julie Thacker

**Members Not Present:**

Jennifer Spencer  
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; Jeff Frownfelter, Director of IT; Mark Costlow, Maintenance Supervisor; 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 January 17, 2025, meeting were reviewed.

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

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

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

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

Education welcomed Naomi Heise the week of March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Ms. Heise will be serving as a teacher's assistant.

Two new students have started since the last meeting in January and multiple tours have been given for prospective students.

IREAD, WIDA, and SAT testing have been completed.

IAM testing will start after spring break and ILEARN will begin in April.

Applied Skills classes and middle school band attended a Discovery Concert with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra on February 26.

Members of the Education staff and Outreach staff have taken tours of Early Childhood centers in the area to learn about what is being offered and to strengthen ISBVI's programming.

Middle School students had the opportunity to attend a Touch and Feel Monster truck show.

Various artists have visited classrooms as part of the TOCAF grant.

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

Outreach consultants continue to provide blind/low vision and Orientation and Mobility services to students around the state.

The Indiana Regional Braille Challenge was held on Saturday, February 22. The theme for the event was "The Little Engine That Could". The school had 19 participants from ISBVI and districts around the state. While students were testing, parents attended different sessions including a meet and greet with Mr. Michaels, GAP analysis study with IBCF, assistive technology, and ECC. Many positive comments were received from parents and students. Many thanks are extended to the Outreach Department, IERC, ISBVI staff, Marta Bridwell and IBCF for their continued support and sponsorships.

The department is preparing for the final four sessions of LEADS Courses; two remaining LEADS Liftoff Courses and one each of the LEAP into LEADS and LEADS Course.

Outreach has started to promote and publicize its summer camps. Two summer camps will be offered: Camp Abilities and Cr-EAT-ivity Camp. Campers who participate in Camp Abilities will participate in sports and other ECC activities such as 5-a-side soccer, beep baseball, tandem biking, visiting a local water park, and much more. Cr-EAT-ivity campers will explore many culinary topics, including adaptive kitchen equipment, safe cooking practices, recipes and planning, baking treats and more. Students will also explore the world of art using a variety of materials. Campers will create self-expression projects and also collaborate to create group projects. A visit to an art museum or sculpture garden for inspiration is planned as well.

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

Residential recently welcomed new staff member, Carmen Chur Pedroza, to the 2<sup>nd</sup> shift.

The next Low Vision clinic will be held March 25.

The ISBVI Wellness Committee will be offering a Wellness Fair at School 94 for all staff and students on March 26.

The contract for food services is currently in the process of being reviewed and approved.

Students in the dorms have been learning how to use air fryers in the evenings.

Applications have been sent to Residential staff to line up dorm staffing for summer campus. The bowling team traveled to Illinois for conference earlier in the month. Two students broke individual score records.

The swimming and forensics seasons have begun. The school is renting North Central's pool for practices.

### **Other:**

ISBVI will be holding a Beeping Egg Hunt on April 10 thanks to a collaboration with Visually Impaired Preschool Services (VIPS) and the Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Hunts will be offered during the day for VIPS and ISBVI students and will be opened to the larger community in the evening.

The May 12 Board meeting will be held at 3:30pm at School 94.

Two additional camps are being held the second week of June. SEE Camp is an overnight camp that will focus on reading, math, assistive technology, and independent living, and will have approximately 20 participants.

In collaboration with Bosma Enterprises, the Student Training Employment Program (STEP) will take place for two weeks and will allow students from around the state to participate in real-life work experience. Students will be housed in dorms at Butler University.

### **Information Technology – Mr. Frownfelter**

The new phones will go live soon with 142 phones for the general population and 20 larger phones for clerical and front desk areas. They are Microsoft Teams based, and the carrier is AT&T. Switching to Teams based phones will save approximately \$12,000 a year in renewals. Since it is a cloud-based phone system, the phones are not “fixed” to a location. The phones are touch screen and have the capability of video. Each computer has the capability of being a phone as well.

Mr. Bridwell asked if the PowerSchool breach had been resolved. Mr. Frownfelter replied that communication had been sent out from the school. Ultimately, PowerSchool took ownership of ongoing communication with all stakeholders and provided free resources for credit checks.

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

Attachment 2A is the monthly financial statement for January 31, 2025. At that point, the year was 59% complete, Point One expenditures were at 60.91%, Points Two through Nine reflected 96.96% spent, and overall expenditures totaled 70.33%. In Preventative Maintenance (PM), 8.03% of the allotment had been spent. The remaining balance of the allotment was \$4,315,832.73.

Attachment 2B, the statement as of February 28, 2025, reflects 67% of the year completed, 68.35% spent from Point One, 98.09% spent from Points Two through Nine, and overall expenditures totaling 76.12%. In PM, 18.02% had been spent. The remaining balance of the allotment was \$3,473,535.89.

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

Attachment 3A reflects the status of positions as of January 31, 2025, with 132 filled regular positions, 52 vacant regular positions, 10 filled intermittent positions and 25 vacant intermittent positions.

Attachment 3B, the report for February 28, 2025, reflects 131 filled regular positions, 53 vacant regular positions, 10 filled intermittent positions and 25 vacant intermittent positions.

#### **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, 2025, to February 28, 2025, totaling \$20. Both donations were restricted.

Attachments 5A and 5B reflect \$50,183.77 in Donations and Contributions over \$499 from January 1, 2025, to February 28, 2025. All four donations were restricted.

##### **B. IBCF**

The No Limits Celebration held on March 1, 2025, was a success. Lachi was the performer for the evening and combined her musical performance with storytelling and disability advocacy. The performance included ASL interpreters, an audio description, braille, and closed captioning. A survey conducted that evening showed that 67% of the attendees' thoughts about people with disabilities changed from the evening's experience.

Thirteen ISBVI students enjoyed a trip to Perfect North Slopes thanks to the IBCF and Dick's Sporting Goods. Each student was paired with two Perfect North staff members who are trained to teach blind and visually impaired individuals how to ski. Students that started apprehensively were showing confidence by the end of the day.

With the remaining funds from the adaptive kitchen project, the foundation has hired chef Tanorria Askew, a semi-finalist on MasterChef, to teach on Fridays in order for the space to be utilized while ISBVI works to find a full-time culinary arts instructor. Tours for donors of the adaptive kitchen will continue to take place.

As part of the Gaps Analysis Project, Taylor Advisors (TA) has helped develop surveys, focus groups, interviews with educational organizations serving individuals who are blind around the country and teams from IBCF and ISBVI have travelled to co-located schools in Arizona and Florida. TA is working to compile this data for the foundation and IBCF will present this in a few months once the summary is received. The recent trip to Florida included trips to the Lighthouse Center in central Florida and the Florida Schools for the Deaf and Blind. The school serves approximately 200 students who are blind or visually impaired on an 83-acre campus. The school has a large budget along with two endowments. The foundation will be following up to learn more about their endowments and how funds are raised.

##### **C. 2024 – 2025 Calendar Revision (Attachment 6)**

The revised 2024 – 2025 school calendar was presented with the proposed change: Monday, April 21, will be changed from a professional development day to a school day to makeup the January 6 snow day.

**Motion:** A motion was made by Mr. Kissling and seconded by Mr. Koors to approve the 2024 – 2025 school calendar with the proposed change; motion carried.

## **V. Public Comments:**

No public comments.

## **VI. Board Comments:**

Mr. Koors asked where the state was in the design of the new school. Mr. Michaels informed the Board that plans are moving along rapidly. The state hopes to be able to release the plans to the community near the end of April. August of 2028 is the target goal for the school to be back on campus.

Ms. Thacker thanked Mr. Wilson for his work at the school and for the tour of School 94 after the last Board meeting. She enjoyed seeing all the ways students are being served at ISBVI.

## **VII. Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting is Monday, May 12, 2025, at 3:30pm at School 94.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

**Motion:** A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Ms. Thacker to adjourn the meeting at 10:34am; motion carried.