

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

ISBVI Board Meeting Minutes
August 26, 2024
9:30 a.m.

Members Present:

Kathy Botkin, Chair
Michael Bridwell
John Kissling
Don Koors
Jennifer Spencer

Members Not Present:

Senator Liz Brown
Andy Cummings

Administration Present: James Michaels, Incoming Superintendent; Jim Durst, Outgoing Superintendent; Raouf Estefanos, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations; 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, Kathy Botkin, called the meeting to order at 9:36am and took roll.

II. Approval of Minutes (Attachment 1)

The minutes from the May 13, 2024, 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

Dave Schleppenbach, President of Tactile Engineering, took a moment to recognize Jim Durst for his commitment to the education, safety, and well-being of students at ISBVI. Mr. Schleppenbach presented two items to Mr. Durst to commemorate one of the many collaborations between himself, Jim, and the ISBVI staff during Jim's time as Superintendent. The first was an encased Cadence unit that was launched into space on October 6, 2023, and returned safely to earth by over 100 students and staff at ISBVI. The second was a photo of the Cadence above the curvature of the earth.

Dave stated that several students have started talking seriously about what they need to do to prepare for college and work for NASA in the future and that, under Jim's leadership, the progress students have made has been amazing.

A. School Update

Education Report – Mr. Michaels

The school year started with 92 students.

Staff have done a wonderful job setting up classrooms and helping students adapt to the new location. ISBVI welcomed two new teachers at the start of the school year. Gary Ferguson is serving as the HS Assistant Principal and Mili Thompson is teaching math.

K-8 language arts Savvas has been introduced.

ECC has begun and is being divided by grade.

Tactile Engineering is up and running.

NWEA testing for elementary and middle school students is currently taking place. Testing for the high school will begin the week of August 26.

Administrators and teachers will welcome parents and students to Back-to-School Night on September 10.

Martha LaBounty introduced two new staff members within the Indiana Educational Resource Center (IERC). Josse Smith has been hired as the new IERC librarian. Josse just finished his master's in information and library science from the University of Wisconsin Madison in May. While there, he worked in the writing center and previously taught 2nd grade in Baltimore, Maryland.

Ryan Malone is the IERC Digital Services Specialist. Ryan has an interest rooted in this work as he has been a lifelong accessible and assistive technology user. He has 23 years of experience working within schools, most recently with IPS Schools in the assistive technology lab and serving as a computer technician.

Related Services – Mr. Askren

Residential Services recently hired Klynn Nelson for the 2nd shift.

Residential staff have worked well together to ensure students are getting settled in the dorms at ISD, and students are doing well with the transition.

The health centers are set up and functioning well in both School 94 and at ISD.

Track team practices are in full swing on the ISD campus.

Side Street Food Services has been secured to provide breakfast and lunch for students.

Miller Transportation is contracting with the school to provide transportation to and from ISD.

Mr. Bridwell asked if internal operating procedures had been updated to reflect the changes between the school and the dormitories.

Mr. Askren reported that the procedures were in the process of being updated.

Mr. Durst informed the board that the new emergency preparedness plan is being finalized and would be ready for board review and approval at the next meeting. A fire drill has been conducted at School 94.

Outreach Report – Ms. Burchett

Outreach has settled into the Dixon House on the ISD Campus. At the ISD all-staff meeting, a brief presentation was given explaining ISBVI Outreach, common eye conditions as well as blind/low vision norms.

For the 2024 – 2025 school year, Outreach has eight full-time consultants and three O&M specialists who are looking forward to serving 300 plus students. The school has contracts with over fifty different districts from around the State of Indiana.

Outreach staff are preparing for the LEADS Courses for the upcoming school year, and will be offering a new LEADS Course, called LEADS Liftoff. This course pertains to transition age students and will instruct students about the three E's – enrollment, employee, and experience.

Two additional courses, Leap into LEADS and the middle-high school LEADS Course, will take place throughout the school year.

ISBVI Outreach has been selected to present this fall at the Council of Schools and Services for the Blind conference on the LEADS program and its origin and implementation.

Physical Plant – Mr. Malone

Maintenance staff have been busy fulfilling standard maintenance requests between four locations and have been moving large amounts of equipment, materials, tools, and vehicles to ISD. Construction of a pole barn at ISD to store these items is due to start within the next week and the targeted finish date is October 1, 2024. Materials that the school does not have space for are being allocated to other state agencies.

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

Attachment 2A is the monthly financial statement for May 31, 2024. At that point, the year was 92% over, Point One expenditures were at 87.74%, Points Two through Nine reflected 98.63% spent, and overall expenditures totaled 90.58%. In Preventative Maintenance (PM), 35.52% of the allotment had been spent. The remaining balance of the allotment was \$1,369,508.20.

Attachment 2B, the statement for the end of FY24, reflects 96.21% spent from Point One, 100.70% spent from Points Two through Nine, and overall expenditures totaling 97.41%. In PM, 43.47% had been spent. The allotment for June was reduced by \$319,146.00 for the purchase of two buses and two trailers. Point Three expenditures were over by \$31,121.82 caused by personnel contracting services for \$62,146.00 that was originally accounted for from Point One. The remaining balance of the allotment was \$368,507.86. The remaining balance in PM totaled \$383,451.28. The total of funds given back including the reversion totaled \$1,048,793.14.

Attachment 2C, is the statement for the start of FY25 as of July 31, 2024. FY25 is the second year of the biennium, and the allotment is the same as the previous year. At that point, the year was 8.5% over, Point One expenditures were at 9.85%, Points Two through Nine reflected 70.5% spent, and

overall expenditures totaled 25.69%. In Preventative Maintenance (PM), 25.69% of the allotment had been spent. The remaining balance of the allotment was \$10,808,537.17.

Saquete Boone transferred from the IERC to the Business Office and will be serving as the Payroll Coordinator. Saquete has five years of experience in payroll and administrative roles.

The exit meeting was held near the beginning of August for the audit conducted in the spring. The State Board of Accounts reported no findings.

Mr. Kissling inquired about excess funds and how often they can be carried over year to year. Mr. Estefanos replied that only excess PM funds may be carried over and only from the first to second years of the biennium budgets.

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

Attachment 3A reflects the status of positions as of May 31, 2024, with 137 filled regular positions, 47 vacant regular positions, 12 filled intermittent positions and 23 vacant intermittent positions.

Attachment 3B, the report for June 30, 2024, reflects 134 filled regular positions, 50 vacant regular positions, 12 filled intermittent positions and 23 vacant intermittent positions.

Attachment 3C reflects the status of positions as of July 31, 2024, with 138 filled regular positions, 46 vacant regular positions, 12 filled intermittent positions and 23 vacant intermittent positions.

IV. New Business

A. IBCF

Laura Alvarado, Executive Director of the Indiana Blind Children's Foundation, presented details about the adaptive kitchen currently being designed for the Culinary Arts Program. The budget for the project is \$281,000.00. The start date is set for October 3, 2024, with heavy construction taking place the week of October 7, 2024. The kitchen will be built at School 94 and the cooking island stations, free standing pantries, and appliances will go back to the new College Ave campus. The launch of the Culinary Arts Program will take place in January for high school students with the intention of offering the program to younger students as the years progress. Two of the four islands will be built at wheelchair height so students in wheelchairs can pull up to the islands and cook along with their peers and have access to the stove top. Inductive stove tops will allow students to get comfortable and build confidence as they work toward using electric stove tops. Additional details in the design that will allow students to be as independent as possible will include:

- Knobs located near the front versus the back of stoves;
- Longer knobs on cabinetry;
- Appliances will have braille overlay;
- Adaptive tools for each student.

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

Attachments 4A, 4B, and 4C reflect Donations and Contributions under \$499 from May 1, 2024, to July 31, 2024, totaling \$30.00. All three donations were restricted.

Attachments 5A, 5B, and 5C reflect \$38,219.94 in Donations and Contributions over \$499 from May 1, 2024, to July 31, 2024. Four donations were restricted, and one was unrestricted.

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

C. 2nd Reading Policy O-72 Outside Entity Collaboration (Attachment 6)

ISBVI Board Policy O-72 mandates active participation from the Superintendent or their delegate in all facets concerning need identification, financial planning, service delivery, program implementation, and information sharing (letters, media, posts, etc.) related to collaborations with external entities seeking or providing support for the school. As a State Agency/school, it is imperative to not only fulfill legal obligations regarding resource solicitation and allocation but also to engage in and authorize resource requests and their utilization, especially regarding student well-being, financial needs, confidentiality, and service and program delivery. This policy ensures thorough planning, approval of requests, and protection of the school's interests. No changes were made from the first reading.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Bridwell and seconded by Mr. Koors to approve the 2nd reading of Policy O-72 Outside Entity Collaboration; motion carried.

D. Upper Respiratory Protocol (Attachment 7)

Covid and other upper respiratory illnesses are on the rise. Due to the fact that ISBVI's student population comes from all over the state where hot spots for illness vary, the school protocol will follow recommendations from the CDC with the exception of, if a student or staff member tests positive for Covid, they will be required to stay home a minimum of three days and mask for five days after returning to school.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Kissling and seconded by Mr. Koors to approve the Covid/Upper Respiratory protocol as presented; motion carried.

E. Food Nutrition Review (Attachment 8)

The IDOE conducted its extensive, three-year administrative review of the school's USDA requirements. The results of the review were positive with two minor corrective actions that have been addressed and resolved.

F. Food Services/Side Street Contract

The school has contracted with Side Street Catering and Food Service to provide breakfast and lunch for students. The quote for the 2024 – 2025 school year is \$108,750. There will be instances where sack lunches will be needed for special events. The total amount with sack lunches is quoted at \$115,000.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Mr. Bridwell to approve spending up to \$115,000 for food services with Side Street Catering and Food Service; motion carried.

G. Transportation/Miller Contract

Miller Transportation provides transportation for students and supervisory staff from ISD to School 94 at the beginning of the school day, and transportation back to ISD after school. The total cost to contract with Miller Transportation for the 2024 – 2025 school year is \$81,000.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Koors and seconded by Mr. Bridwell to approve the contract with Miller Transportation for \$81,000; motion carried.

H. MOU for ISBVI and ISD

ISBVI is in the process of developing an MOU with ISD regarding the transferring of staff and sharing staff between the schools to utilize individuals in the best way possible. ISBVI has transferred three Steam Plant staff and three Dietary staff to ISD. More information will be shared with the board upon the completion of the MOU.

I. Culinary Arts Kitchen Construction

(See Item A under New Business)

J. Other School 94 Renovations

Many renovations are taking place at School 94. In addition to the kitchen for the Culinary Arts Program, other renovations taking place include:

- Trenching through the floor in the health center to add a bathroom and a shower;
- Splitting a classroom into four separate office spaces;
- Finishing offices for the Superintendent and the Administrative Assistant;
- Courtyard renovations to make a more accessible recreational space for students.

Mr. Kissling asked if the renovation costs were the responsibility of ISBVI or IPS.

Mr. Durst replied that some of the courtyard expenses are IPS' responsibility, such as unsafe pavement. But the vast majority are changes that the school requested to meet the needs of students. These changes fall under the school's expense but may be funded through project dollars rather than funds directly from the school's budget.

Mr. Koors asked about the status of the fence.

Mr. Durst informed the board that it was approved and will be installed within the next four weeks.

K. Annual Leases for Schools 83 and 94 (Attachments 9 & 10)

ISBVI has signed leases for both School 83 and School 94. For School 83, the cost is approximately \$9,000 per month and School 94 is just over \$13,000 per month. Custodial costs are not included in the contracts. ISBVI opted to use IPS staff for its custodial needs and these costs will be billed separately. In addition, utilities are not included in the lease costs and the school is being billed separately from individual utility companies.

Mr. Bridwell asked if ISBVI would run into issues exiting the contract if the new school is completed earlier than expected. Mr. Durst confirmed that there would not be an issue due to the termination of the convenience clause.

L. Book Adoption

Several books in different formats have been ordered recently to replace outdated material. The school

has spent \$172,000 and requested approval to spend up to \$175,000 to ensure that all materials needed are covered.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Bridwell and seconded by Mr. Koors to approve spending up to \$175,000 for books and accessible materials; motion carried.

M. MAPT Rebranding Contract

MAPT has been working with the school to assist in the transition of the school to new locations. MAPT has helped design new web content, new logos and letterhead, and new signage coming in September. They are working with the state to ensure all information is accessible.

N. New Phone System

After finding a carrier for the project (AT&T), the project was postponed due to the move. A new scope and quote will be needed due to the delay. The \$28,000 donation from the Lions is still available to use. On a positive note, waiting to move into the new locations helped reduce the scope and cost because ISBVI can utilize the IPS bell system and a portion of their intercom system at 94. The new quote will be presented to the Board once it is received.

O. Board Nominations and Elections

Board member nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair positions were taken.

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Kissling and seconded by Ms. Botkin to approve Mr. Bridwell as Chair and Mr. Koors as Vice-Chair; motion carried.

P. Superintendent Transition

Mr. Durst acknowledged the transition of Mr. Michaels as Superintendent and commented that he is confident that Mr. Michaels will serve ISBVI well and take the school to new levels. They have been working closely together since Mr. Michaels joined the staff in the first week of August. Mr. Durst thanked the Board for their support over the years and for sharing their unique levels of expertise to better the school. Mr. Michaels will be taking over day-to-day operations after today's meeting. Mr. Durst will be consulting until his last day on Monday, September 30, 2024.

V. Public Comments:

No public comments.

VI. Board Comments:

Ms. Botkin thanked Mr. Durst for his service to the school.

Mr. Koors asked about the status of new vehicles for the fleet.

Mr. Durst replied that the following were purchased for the fleet:

- Five Chevy Equinox's for Outreach. These are currently being built and are expected in the fall.
- An open trailer (currently working on securing a closed trailer)
- Two new 27-passenger buses
- Two new 5-passenger trucks (currently waiting on these)

Fleet Services monitors preventative maintenance for the fleet.

VII. Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired School Board will be Monday, October 21, 2024, at 9:30am at School 83.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Bridwell and seconded by Mr. Koors to adjourn the meeting at 10:56am; motion carried.