

MINUTES
ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR MATHEMATICS, SCIENCES, AND THE ARTS
BOARD OF VISITORS REGULAR MEETING

April 2, 2014
5:00 p.m.

The Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts (ASMSA) Board of Visitors met in the Boardroom on the first floor at 200 Whittington Avenue, Hot Springs, Arkansas.

I. CALL TO ORDER

In the absence of Mr. Luther Lowe, Chair, Mrs. Merry, Secretary convened the Board of Visitors regular meeting into open session at 5:05 p.m. and welcomed all Board members.

II. ESTABLISH QUORUM

Members Present

Mrs. Leigh Merry, Secretary
 Mr. Hayward Battle
 Mrs. Donna Casparian
 Mrs. Cynthia Miller, Ph.D.

Members Absent

Mr. Luther Lowe, Chair
 Mrs. Karen Garcia, Vice Chair
 Mrs. Donna Hutchison

Ex-Officio Members Present

Mrs. Mary Kathryn Stein, designee for Tom Kimbrell, Ph.D., Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education Association
 Ms. Marta Gwyn Collier, designee for Tim Atkinson, Ph.D., President, Arkansas Science and Technology Authority
 Mr. Bryan Hernandez, President, Student Government Association
 Mrs. Pamela Knapp Carver, President, Parents Association

Ex-Officio Members Absent

Mr. Shane Broadway, Director, Arkansas Department of Higher Education
 Ms. Joy Pennington, designee for Cathie Matthews, Director, Department of Arkansas Heritage

Administrative Members Present

Mr. Corey Alderdice, Director
 Mrs. JaNan Abernathy, Director of Finance
 Mr. William Currier, Dean of Students
 Mrs. Lorraine Munroe, Administrative Assistant

Administrative Members Absent

Mr. Chris Robbins, Dean of Distance Education and Information Technology
 Mr. Bob Gregory, Dean of Academic Affairs

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Battle and seconded by Mrs. Casparian to approve the minutes of December 2, 2013. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Director's Comments – Corey Alderdice

Director Alderdice stated that after a national search, Mr. Bob Gregory was confirmed with a unanimous recommendation as Dean of Academic Affairs.

Mr. Alderdice reported that the students will have a session with faculty members on registration for the fall semester.

Director Alderdice stated that in early March ASMSA had a two day external review by a team from AdvancED, who is the accreditor through the North Central Association. Mr. Alderdice reported that the team offered positive responses on strong practices of the campus as well as in certain areas for improvement. The areas of improvement are mostly in professional development for the faculty. Director Alderdice said that one of the challenges institutionally that ASMSA has through the review process is that the reviewers want to map traditional K-12 structures to the program. Because ASMSA does serve a diverse background of students, there are topics that are beyond the more traditional and instructional professional development of benefit to our learning community. Director Alderdice stated that the area that the school was very much praised was the student support systems that are in place for student success. The external review team was extremely impressed with the quality of ASMSA's support staff in the session that they had with them. Certainly the academic affairs, finance staff and residence life support staff had productive conversations both on things that are being done well and areas that need improvement.

Director Alderdice stated that the fiscal session ended with the "private option" passing. With the exception of a fewer institutions, most of higher ed is looking at stable Revenue Stabilization Act funding. The good news for ASMSA is the predominant funding is through the Education Excellence Trust Fund that is approximately a 2.8% increase which is forecasted to be about \$200,000 for next year. That will certainly accommodate a 2% employee salary increase across the board.

Director Alderdice reported on the RUS Grant advising the Board that ASMSA received a \$499,905 grant from the US Department of Agriculture. This grant has been previously received to provide distance education services and equipment in the Delta region of Arkansas. Mr. Alderdice stated this was the first time that a \$250,000 private match was made from the Walton Family Foundation. Mr. Alderdice stated that ASMSA will be making those purchases and working with those districts beginning this summer.

Director Alderdice discussed the academic awards. He stated that Yeongwoo Hwang was named one of the *Arkansas Times* Academic All-Stars. The list will come out in the next few weeks. Mr. Hwang makes the 23rd ASMSA student to be named on the list. This is the 20th Anniversary of the All-Star List as well. On their website they do have "Where Are They Now" profiles as they appeared in high school and is fascinating to go back and see ASMS and ASMSA alums, one of which was a Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee Champion and one was a Jeopardy! Team Champion.

Director Alderdice stated that the institution was very fortunate to receive a \$5,000 grant from Arkansans for Gifted and Talented Education (AGATE) to launch the ASMSA

Humanities Days program this spring and into next fall. The program is modeled after the institution's Saturday enrichment Science and Engineering Institute (SEI) program.

Director Alderdice reported that the list has come down to five finalists for a new full-time arts instructor position on campus. In addition to teaching four studio classes, they will also serve as the Campus Arts Coordinator. The person will work to be one of the school's community liaisons in the arts. This will free up many of the faculty members who have been involved with the arts to offer additional elective opportunities. This will help to strengthen the pilot program with a Humanities Emphasis as well. The school is exploring renovating the old library computer lab in the Pine Street Building as a transitional space and turn it into an art studio. This will be in a more prominent space on campus to showcase student talent.

Mrs. Casparian stated her disappointment that the students did not participate in the Sister City arts program since ASMSA is involved in the Sister City Foundation travel to Japan. Mrs. Casparian said that it would have been more politically astute to have strongly encouraged participation in the program. Director Alderdice stated that Anne Greenwood, Department Chair, shared that information with the students. Mrs. Casparian stated that participation is totally lacking and the students need to put themselves out there to participate. Director Alderdice concurred. He also stated that students in both the institutional and individual competitions will now have additional courses to cultivate those talents and abilities. He also stated that it is certainly always great to see ASMSA's name in the press releases for those competitions. Competitive scholarships as it pertains to both the arts and sciences has been a point of concern because it benefits both students and the school.

Mr. Battle stated that he hoped when the *Washington Post's* article comes out naming the school as one of the "Public Elite" high schools in 2015, that the institution will get some local press on the announcement. Director Alderdice stated that he did not anticipate hearing anything on the Public Elite's article this year. He said that they calculate their data based on the previous group of graduates. Director Alderdice reported that the number that he is working on at this time for this year is the 28.8 ACT score which is a substantial improvement from the 26.6 score from the Class of 2012. He said what is interesting and disappointing is the 28.8 from the Class of 2013 is actually higher than a couple of schools scores who are currently on the list.

Director Alderdice stated *Newsweek* has not sent out any requests for data just yet. With the separation of that publication from the *Daily Beast*, and with their return to action offering a print magazine, Mr. Alderdice stated that he would be surprised if they did not continue to do the ranking. He reported that having spoken to several of ASMSA's peer institutions, they have not heard any word from *Newsweek* as well. Mr. Alderdice reported that *U.S. News and World Report* will release their rankings on April 21. He stated that ASMSA does not appear in those rankings because they pull that data from the National Center for Educational Statistics. Because ASMSA is not tied into ADE like traditional high schools there is not a process for ASMSA to send data to them.

Mrs. Merry stated that regardless of what list ASMSA is on, to have that kind of ACT increase is incredible and congratulated Mr. Alderdice.

Mr. Alderdice stated that faculty member, Carl Frank, is being inducted into the Arkansas Academy of Computing. Mr. Alderdice stated that it is a tremendous organization and speaks very highly toward Mr. Frank's contributions in computer science and computer science education in Arkansas and is proud to have him lead those efforts at ASMSA.

2. Financial Report – Janan Abernathy

Mrs. Abernathy referred to the quarterly financial reports as of December 31. Mrs. Abernathy stated that the next quarterly reports will be due April 15 and that the month of April will be an extremely busy month planning and budgeting. She reported that she is starting to work on the reports for the next legislative session. Capital requests will be submitted to ADHE April 7. Quarterly reports are due to the Systems Office April 11. Personal Services Request and the Nonformula Operating Requests are due April 25 to ADHE for the next legislative session for new funding. Mrs. Abernathy stated that the budget exhibits for the next fiscal year will be due to the System office on May 1. She reported in the following week, budget meetings will be held on campus to address year-end requests or new funding needs. Mrs. Abernathy stated that Director Alderdice reported that the expected increase in funding next year is about \$200,000; however, when you look at approximately \$100,000 of that amount being applied toward personnel and benefit increases, utility increases, vendor increases, little is left over.

3. Residential Affairs Report – William Currier

Mr. Currier stated that the Community Leaders have been chosen for next year.

Ms. Perry, Activities Coordinator, has a tuxedo company coming in to fit the students for prom. The company will deliver and pick up the tux's after prom. Mrs. Perry is also working with some of the young ladies using the Clothes Closet to find prom dresses. Mr. Currier stated that final plans for prom have not be determined as yet since some vendors have not responded back to Mr. Currier.

Mr. Currier stated that his department continues to go to some of the placement conferences in the state recruiting residential mentors for next year.

Some of the people on Dean Currier's staff are working on their Master's Degree that sends out a message that the school values education and professional development for support staff.

Mr. Currier stated that a sexual education program was offered to the students with about 50 of the students partaking in the program -- 18 males and 32 females. He stated that free prom tickets were given to the first 15 signups.

Mrs. Casparian interjected stating the there was a discussion at the last meeting regarding Planned Parenthood coming to the campus to discuss sex education and the idea was nixed. Mr. Currier stated that it was decided to go with a more central theme because he stated there may have been some concerned parents if the school went that route. He reported that the Garland County Health Department came to the school to present the program that was attended voluntarily by students, and parents had to sign a permission slip for students to attend.

Mrs. Casparian asked Mr. Currier if the presentation required parents' permission. Mr. Currier, and also Director Alderdice, strongly stated that the program would not have been offered without at least providing parental consent, especially with the number of minor students. Mrs. Casparian replied that in many public schools the program is presented without having to get parental permission. In response to Mrs. Casparian, Mr. Currier stated that ASMSA is a different school and after seven years as being the Dean, he has a great deal of experience of what goes on in the residential program. He stated that parents call him and they are concerned about a movie that is rated "R". He stated that he is diplomatic when programs are instituted and have the students get familiar and more comfortable with them as they are developed. Mr. Currier stated that students submitted their permission slip to the nurse or they presented it at the door when they went to attend the class. Mr. Currier stated that some students were encouraged to attend the program by their parents and there were some that did not want to deal with it. Mrs. Casparian stated that she considers the program to be a matter of public health and not just sex ed. Mrs. Casparian stated that it prepares young people to step out into the community, and she is highly concerned that this is not part of the curriculum. She stated that it is part of biology and reproductive systems are taught at the school and those classes are taken without getting a parent's permission. Mr. Currier stated that there is an established curriculum. Mr. Currier cited examples of having a DJ come to play music at prom. The DJ is told what music can be played and what language is acceptable so parents or students are not offended that attend. He stated if music that was chosen was inappropriate, it would come back and not only hurt enrollment, but would also hurt the school's relationships with the parents. Mr. Currier stated that it is a tough line to walk but he the school tries to create a situation where the school can gain support.

Director Alderdice stated that where Mr. Currier ended the conversation was the most important piece for the institution. Mr. Alderdice stated that ASMSA has not previously done a sexual health seminar and the goal was to test the waters and ultimately see if there would be parental concern in offering the program. Mr. Alderdice stated that he had received feedback from the nurse that some of the parents were pleased with the seminar. Director Alderdice reported that, again, it was an elective program, and if it was a compulsory session, you would have seen some parents express concern. Mr. Alderdice stated that the response that was received was favorable feedback from the students and parents and it encourages and emboldens the school as to what we will do in the future. Mr. Alderdice said it was critical to get a barometer of what the climate was with the current parents and see even how the students responded to it.

In response to Mrs. Casparian's question if there was feedback from the students, Dean Currier stated that the nurse did in fact receive feedback from the students. Mrs. Casparian reported that it is incumbent to have feedback to see where the holes are and stated that with most curriculum for sexuality there needs to be a coed session. Mrs. Casparian said that there is good data to support that and she can provide websites to obtain that information. Mrs. Casparian stated that information needs to be readily available to students. She stated that students have a lot of sexual identity issues at any school and for a student to feel comfortable the school needs to show them that there are a lot of open doors. She stated that if a student feels that if they have to get parental permission, it builds a barricade with the student. She stated that the message it gives the student is that they cannot talk about it without their parents' permission. Mr. Currier stated that this is the first time that an attempt has been made on this subject. He said that he is more than willing to modify procedures to move forward but wanted to do it so that it will have structure. Mrs. Casparian stated that there will be students leaving the institution with real problems and real difficulties adjusting to college. She stated that the school is getting the student prepared academically but has to get them there emotionally, too.

Ms. Collier stated that it should be reflected in the minutes that it would be helpful to get the Parents Association representative to give some additional input on the conversation and share their opinions as well.

Mrs. Merry asked if a blank consent sheet could be signed that says, “My son/daughter has the option to attend (blank) seminar. Mr. Currier stated that the parents sign a sheet that gives permission to use photographs of the student, but there is not a blank sheet that gives blanket permission for the student to attend seminars. Mrs. Merry stated that maybe there should be something in the handbook that states the school is offering certain things during the year and if they would like for your son/daughter to be able to participate they can sign the form. This way the parents can sign off that they are allowed to participate in the seminars, etc. that are held on campus.

Ms. Collier suggested a consent form that suggests something like...“these are the programs that we will conduct during the year and if you have an objection to it, please contact us”. This way if the parent does have a concern or objection about it, it would be on the parent and not the school.

Mr. Battle stated for the record that, being a lawyer, people sue for everything. He stated that the school would do well to proceed cautiously with the issue of sexual education. Not only would it create problems for the school but people will call their legislators, and they can cause the school a lot of concerns. It could create a lot of heat for the school, and people who the school thought were their friends, would not be the school’s friend for long. He stated that he was not the school’s lawyer; but if he was the school’s lawyer, he would tell the school to proceed cautiously about these kinds of issues. Mrs. Casparian stated you can be cautious but not be in fear.

Mr. Currier stated that he the suggestions were good ones and will follow up with perhaps listing the seminars that the school is offering in the *Student Handbook*. He stated that this way it is out in the open and the school is not hiding anything and if the parents have a problem with it, they can tell the school that they are not comfortable with their son/daughter taking that particular seminar. Director Alderdice stated that another area to look under is Health Services as well and the variety of health services that the school does provide. Mr. Alderdice stated that it would be good to look at where some of these things can be folded under existing structures. He said it was important to get a barometer on student interest and parental concerns.

Mr. Hernandez stated that there are pamphlets and other information outside of the nurse’s office for easy student access.

4. Academic Affairs Board Report – Bob Gregory

Dean Gregory was not present due to illness. Director Alderdice had incorporated Dean Gregory’s report in his report to the Board.

5. Office of Distance Education and Information Technology – Chris Robbins

Chris Robbins was absent due to traveling.

Director Alderdice discussed the USDA RUS Grant that will be providing services to Arkansas districts. Parameters around ACT 1280 are still coming into focus. Director Alderdice reported that ASMSA was approved as a digital learning provider by the State Department of Education. In addition, he said that there were the usual out-of-state distance learning providers, e.g. APEX, BYU. There were a variety of two-year institutions in the State who were approved as providers as well. Mr. Alderdice stated that the one anomaly on the list was Crystal Bridges who was approved as a digital learning provider. Mr. Alderdice reported that it does mean ASMSA will be able to offer a digital learning curriculum.

Virtual Arkansas began their registration on this date. Director Alderdice stated that ASMSA will not be a part of what was previously the Consortium for 2014-2015. He reported that he is awaiting the final confirmation of Dr. Kimbrell's pledge of support for the Pathways Program but is moving full steam ahead with preparations on that.

Mr. Alderdice reported that one of the other issues that IT has been exploring is a closer examination of campus bandwidth usage and campus bandwidth needs for the coming year. He stated that there is a recent report that showed 38% of ASMSA's bandwidth over the last month went to Netflix, Steam, Tumblr and YouTube. He reported that ten students were using about 25% of the bandwidth as well. Director Alderdice reported that he is looking to balance some of ASMSA's structures between the Department of Information Systems for part of ASMSA's bandwidth and then moving with a propriety provider like AT&T to flesh out some of ASMSA's bandwidth issues. At this point, ASMSA's goal is to add at least another 100 megabytes of data access in the coming year. Over a three-year span, ASMSA will have quadrupled its bandwidth.

Mrs. Merry asked if all the students had a personal laptop. Mr. Alderdice responded that a survey was taken in the fall and shows approximately 90% of the students bring a personal computer, most of which are laptops. He said that there are fewer than fifteen students that bring desktops, mainly because they are custom built machines. For those students that do not have a computer, Director Alderdice stated that the school has purchased Microsoft Surface tablets so that students would have a device that they can have with them at all times. Twenty desktop computers have also been installed in the library and other computer labs are also available. Director Alderdice reported that what is particularly meaningful is that ASMSA has about 20 laptops that students can check out of the library. Based on the success of the program, IT has purchased another ten MacBook Pros. The school will have 30 laptops that are available for checkout. The Library is getting more and more comfortable with students being able to have those devices overnight. Director Alderdice stated that within the next two years that may be the time where the school can provide a laptop to a student if they state that they do not have the means to purchase one themselves. It may not be a top-of-the-line machine, but certainly will be suitable for their daily computing needs.

Mrs. Merry asked if any of the classes were totally digital. Director Alderdice stated that none of the course offerings were totally digital but there has been discussion on how ASMSA wants to deal with Act 1280 in the context of the school's program. He stated that Act 1280 is fairly open territory with how little one has to blend to meet requirements. Director Alderdice reported that two courses of interest for ASMSA are Intro Composition courses that every student will take and Design and Analysis of Experiments (DnA), which is the introductory course in the research sequence.

The GLASS and Pathways distance learning courses next year will be a blend of the prerecorded on-line office hours and then the actual residential physical lab weekends for those students. Director Alderdice stated that the point of interest right now is trying to find the right amount of synchronous instruction. The challenge of the courses that are exclusively digital is that one has to have a very motivated and self-directed learner in order to carry the course without day-to-day faculty guidance.

6. Office of Institutional Advancement

Director Alderdice reported that Mr. Reed submitted his resignation effective immediately. Mr. Alderdice stated that the main event that Development is working on this spring is the Community of Learning Luncheon. Mr. Alderdice reported that Mr. Reed had been working with several members of the Clinton camp with Mrs. Clinton possibly coming in

for an event in the spring; however, this will not transpire. Dr. Ron Hart, who had a part in the creation of the school, had been the primary person who was working on having this happen. Director Alderdice stated that Development is working with Daniel Sims, an alum from the Class of 2006 who does development consulting in Little Rock. Mr. Alderdice stated that Governor Beebe will be the keynote speaker for the event. The event is based on the Benevon Model. We are waiting to hear from one last sponsor to cover the cost of the event. There will be thirty tables each led by a Table Captain. Currently, the Table Captains are the Foundation Fund Board Ambassadors. Director Alderdice asked the Board if they would consider serving as a Table Captain, reaching out to friends, colleagues, etc. It is a celebration of ASMSA talking about the institution's needs but serves as a springboard to have more individualized conversations about their interest in supporting the institution. The event will take place on Tuesday, May 13, at the Arlington Hotel. State Representative, Warwick Sabin, a second year Representative from the Little Rock area and the Executive Director of the Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub in North Little Rock, will serve as the Master of Ceremonies for the event. The institution is doing everything it can to get Representative Sabin and Joel Gordon, Director of the Launch Pad at the Innovation Hub, to find a way to collaborate with them. The event should be attended by approximately 250 people.

Director Alderdice reported that the school continues to work with the Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Fram, President of the Chamber, has been a tremendous advocate for the institution and plans are coming together nicely for the fall event later on this year. Mr. Alderdice stated that there has been an increase in alumni data submitted. Mr. Alderdice stated that several of the Development officers from our peer institutions are having a meeting in Chicago at the end of this month and they are collaboratively hosting a joint reception for alumni. ASMSA has about a dozen alumni right now in the Chicago area. Approximately 100 alumni from all of the sister schools are expected for the event. A soft version of this type of event was done in Colorado November 2012 while the NAGC Convention was going on. About a dozen ASMSA alums attended.

7. Parents Association – Mrs. Pamela Knapp-Carver

Mrs. Carver was not present at the meeting. Therefore, no report was given.

8. Student Government Association – Bryan Hernandez

Mr. Hernandez stated that a new tradition was started during finals week referred to as “The Primal Scream.” This is when all the students meet outside of the Student Center and let out a scream to vent final exam frustrations.

Mr. Hernandez reported that a Winter Formal Dance was held with a Sadie Hawkins theme.

Also during the month of February, the SGA sold Val-O-Grams during the week of Valentine's Day. The SGA, working with RM Jason Riley, is finalizing the Arkansas Association of Student Council's Conference that will be held in mid April.

Elections were also held for next year. Mr. Hernandez stated that Sophia Ly will be SGA President and Margaret Easley was elected Vice President and Nicole Brooks was elected Treasurer. The position of Secretary has not been chosen at this time.

Mr. Hernandez advised the Board that the seniors are organizing a senior retreat.

V. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to report.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Battle asked about the guest speaker for graduation. Mr. Alderdice stated that he is working with a few of the class members of 1999 to try to get on their schedule. Given that it is their fifteenth year from graduating from ASMSA, Mr. Alderdice would like to find one of the members who can resonate with the audience. Suggestions are welcome.

Ms. Collier thanked Director Alderdice and ASMSA in helping with the delivery of a project with the EAST Initiative. Ms. Collier stated that she could not have facilitated the competition had ASMSA not answered her call for assistance when a person backed out of the competition at the last minute. Ms. Collier expressed her appreciation for ASMSA's help.

VII. AUDIENCE WITH INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS

No request or comment from an individual or group.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, a motion was made by Mr. Battle and seconded by Mrs. Casparian to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Approved as written AM Approved as amended _____

Mrs. Leigh Merry
Mrs. Leigh Merry, Secretary

5/11/14
(Date)