

ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR
MATHEMATICS, SCIENCES, AND THE ARTS
200 Whittington Avenue
Hot Springs, AR 71901

Regular Quarterly Meeting

May 6, 2024
5:00 P.M.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://asmsa.zoom.us/j/93390691165>

Meeting ID: 933 9069 1165

Audio only phone #: 1-312-626-6799

AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. ESTABLISH QUORUM
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 4, 2024, MEETING
- IV. SPECIAL PRESENTATION
 - Stanford Challenge Success Survey of Adolescent Student Experiences
Dr. Rheo Morris, Dean of Students
- V. CONSENT AGENDA
 - Presentation of Quarterly Report
 - Student Government Association Update
 - Parents Association Update
 - Governing Council Update
 - Association for Alumni and Friends Update
- VI. OLD BUSINESS
- VII. NEW BUSINESS
 - FY25 Budget Submission to Board of Trustees
 - Election of Board of Visitors Officers for AY25
- VIII. ADJOURNMENT

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

March 4, 2024

5:00 p.m.

The Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts (ASMSA) Board of Visitors met in person and virtually via Zoom.

I. CALL TO ORDER

In absence of Chairman Barnes, Dr. Battle convened the Board of Visitors' regular meeting into open session at 5:05 p.m.

II. ESTABLISH QUORUM

Members Present

Dr. Marlene Battle ('97), Vice-Chair
 Mr. Brian Reed, Secretary
 Ms. Mary Alice Chambers (Zoom)
 Mrs. Mary Zunick

Members Absent

Mr. Timothy Barnes, Chair

Ex-Officio Members Present

Mrs. Krystal Nail, Program Director,
 Division of Elementary & Secondary
 Education Services, Office of Gifted
 and Talented Placement (Zoom)
 Mr. Patrick Ralston, Director, Arkansas
 Arts Council (Zoom)
 Mrs. Amy Stvartak ('11), Chair, Association
 for Alumni and Friends of ASMSA
 Dr. Patrycja Krakowiak, President,
 Governing Council
 Mr. Daniel Nkunga, President,
 Student Government Association

Ex-Officio Members Absent

Dr. Kelley Lammers, Chair, Parents
 Advisory Council
 Ms. Jennifer Fowler ('04), Director,
 Arkansas National Science
 Foundation EPSCoR

Administrative Members Present

Mr. Corey Alderdice, Director
 Mr. Stuart Flynn, Dean of Academic Affairs (Zoom)
 Dr. Rheo Morris, Dean of Students
 Mr. Jason Hudnell, Director of Admissions
 Ms. Ashley Bennett, Director of
 Institutional Advancement
 Mrs. Nia Rieves, Director of Human Resources
 & Campus Culture
 Mrs. Cara Jay, Annual Giving & Alumni Coordinator

Administrative Members Absent

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Battle called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. and stated that a quorum had been established before asking for a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes. Mr. Reed made a motion that was seconded by Mrs. Zunick. The motion was passed unanimously.

IV. SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Dr. Crystal Miller with the National Consortium of Secondary STEM Schools was welcomed and introduced by Director Alderdice. Director Alderdice highlighted the work Dr. Miller has completed over the past two years to build out the framework for the NCSSS Insight Survey (<https://www.ncsss.org/ncsss-survey/>). The survey has provided two years of comparative data as well as a benchmark, which has been instrumental in fulfilling components of the Advocacy and Partnerships tenant of ASMSA's 2025 Strategic Plan.

Dr. Miller thanked ASMSA for sponsoring the NCSSS Insight Survey for the past two years. She stated that, while the first-year survey topics focused more on differentiating factors of the participating STEM schools, the second-year questions were intended to dig deeper. She stated that the second survey was to primarily note socio-economic changes in metrics such as family and student body composition, STEM class enrollment diversity data, and enrollment information with students on free or reduced lunches. The difference in respondents between the two years was also noted, with there being 42 responses for 2023 versus 52 in 2022. Of those 42, 34 were replicate schools that participated in 2022, and eight were new schools.

The first question regarding STEM class enrollment concerned the highest math option class enrollment by race/ethnicity. Compared to 2022 survey results, there was an increase in Asian/Pacific Islander enrollment, while Hispanic/Latino enrollment decreased. Dr. Miller noted that the 2023 Insight Survey – rather than asking what higher math classes were being offered – focused instead on who is taking the higher math courses to gain a better idea of representation at the participating schools. By gender, the survey revealed that there was a slight decrease in females taking the highest math courses, but there was no significant difference between male and female student enrollment in the highest math courses. There was also no significant difference in the highest math or “double math and science class” enrollment between low-income students and the rest of the student population.

One other new question in the 2023 Insight Survey concerned the participating schools' costs per student. Dr. Miller stated that this seemed to be a difficult question for most schools to answer as it involved many variables and required information and data some schools may not have immediate access to. She commented that some schools reported what students pay while other schools reported what is billed to home districts; however, many schools don't even track this information. With this data, the average cost per pupil averaged between \$10,000-15,000 with residential STEM schools and schools affiliated with colleges reporting much higher costs at between \$20,000-25,000 per student.

The participating schools offered a wide selection of both STEM and elective courses ranging from Paradigms of Science, Society, and Literature, to App & Game Development, to Time

Travel. The percentage of students participating in extracurricular activities as well as the faculty incentives to mentor extracurriculars was also asked. Regarding student resources such as career services, business partnerships, Advanced Placement classes, or dual enrollment, residential schools are 30% more likely to offer life skill classes. Dr. Miller commented that the resources offered varied greatly between school types; for instance, schools located on college campuses were twice as likely to offer dual enrollment or college classes over AP classes, while 4-year and 5-8+ year schools were twice as likely to offer AP courses than 2–3-year schools. Other questions on the survey involved tutoring and mentorship options, alternative and innovative classroom spaces, the usage of cloud technology, student outcome/alumni data, specifically whether schools were tracking this data, and faculty recruitment and retention.

Director Alderdice again thanked Dr. Miller for her work done with the survey and for presenting the survey results with the Board. Dr. Miller provided her email and invited Board members to reach out if they had any questions.

Mrs. Zunick asked if Dr. Miller had any thoughts on why some schools that completed the 2022 survey did not complete the 2023 survey. Dr. Miller commented that some of those schools only completed half of the questions and that some schools had issues due to much of the information covered in the survey not being easily accessible.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

Quarterly Report - Director Alderdice

Director Alderdice drew the Board's attention to a recent court case where the United States Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal involving admissions practices at a selective public science and technology high school in Virginia. He noted that it was surprising in light of the recent actions against the admissions practices at Harvard and the University of North Carolina in the *Students for Fair Admissions* cases in 2022. The outcome of this recent decision presents potential paths forward as both universities and schools like ASMSA navigate admissions and enrollment management. Director Alderdice mentioned a commentary piece in *Politico* regarding how the admissions policy for the Thomas Jefferson High School for Sciences and Technology may serve as new template for selective colleges and universities and, incidentally, ASMSA. He stated that the topic of equity in admissions is usually not framed within the context of excellence gaps and, therefore, doesn't address how high-ability/low-income students can fulfill their potential. This directly impacts both ASMSA's longitudinal commitment to low-income students as well as programs such as the HELIX Prep Academy; however, the possibility of the TJHSST selective admissions process serving as an allowed possible template is favorable news and a potential way for ASMSA to continue its selective admissions process while also bridging those opportunity gaps for low income and limited opportunity students in Arkansas.

Construction continues on the new Campus Administration Building. Director Alderdice stated that brickwork will be finished this week and followed by some exterior metal and stucco work with all indications that administrative staff should be in the building the first week of June.

Director Alderdice complimented both staff and students on a variety of successes and accomplishments listed in the supplemental materials. He humorously remarked that there are too many to mention in fear of giving priority to one over the other, but everyone is doing great things and keeping Mr. Donnie Sewell, ASMSA's Public Information Specialist, very busy.

Ms. Chambers commented that Alex Back made principal horn in the All-State Band competition and that he is the first ASMSA student ever to make First Chair in horn.

Student Government Association - Daniel Nkunga

Mr. Nkunga greeted the Board before sharing his report. ASMSA placed second in SLAMT this past weekend for the first time in ASMSA's history.

He stated that the semester had started with the Winter Formal, which was themed around the Yule Ball from Harry Potter. SGA is currently working with the campus clubs on a Culture Fest that will be held on March 10th. Mr. Nkunga commented that the SGA has been focused on making the student clubs more active on campus this year by running not only the smaller local events but also larger events that would be open to the public.

Mr. Nkunga commented that the biggest hurdle for the SGA this year has been organizing and funding the Senior Trip. He noted that a lot of things go into the planning process and that SGA is trying to find ways to make the process more sustainable for future class Senior Trips.

SGA is also working on DolphinStock. While the event was previously organized by ASMSA faculty members and staff, this year it will be run by SGA and the campus clubs. DolphinStock will be held during the week of the eclipse.

Mrs. Zunick asked what time the Culture Fest will start. Mr. Nkunga responded that it will be an afternoon event, most likely from 2pm-5pm.

Parents Association Committee - Dr. Kelley Lammers

Dr. Lammers was not present to share her report.

Governing Council - Dr. Patrycja Krakowiak

Dr. Krakowiak stated that campus is currently looking forward to the total eclipse and that the Governing Council is looking at some of the logistics involved such as the student science projects and transport as well as contingency plans for cloud cover.

The Governing Council has also continued working to make the body more representative of the school. Dr. Krakowiak stated that there have been discussions on adding two more permanent positions representing either Admissions or the Finance department. Lab peer mentor positions in the Science Department for research students have also been added. Serving as peer mentors not only offers students more opportunities within the strong research program at ASMSA but also gives them something to put on their resumes.

There has also been collaboration with the Office of Scholar Development to identify and match students with available internships and other opportunities for the summer.

Dr. Krakowiak stated that the Governing Council is also still working on organizing a Class Fair, which was requested by the SGA. The Class Fair would give students the opportunity to know all the classes being offered and learn about some of the options they may not have been aware of previously.

Mrs. Zunick asked if this would be a digital event. Dr. Krakowiak responded that it would be in person with tables set up around the room in a similar style to the Club Fair.

Association for Alumni and Friends of ASMSA - Amy Stvartak

Mrs. Stvartak commented that the mixers for alumni are currently going well. There will be a mixer held in Fayetteville on March 7th and another is scheduled for Little Rock on April 4th.

Mrs. Stvartak stated that it has been difficult getting speakers organized for the Alumni Pathways Speaker series, but they'll continue working on the events for next year.

Ms. Bennett noted that there had been a Pathways Speaker event in February, and it was well attended. She stated that she and Mrs. Jay, who was recently hired as the Annual Giving & Alumni Coordinator, will be looking at the series over the summer and determining how they want to move forward.

Mrs. Stvartak stated that with the Annual Giving & Alumni Coordinator position being filled, the Association for Alumni & Friends would once again have a dedicated staff member working with alumni and that they were really excited about that and that it would "make a tremendous difference."

VI. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to report.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Director Alderdice drew the Board's attention to a document in the Supplemental Packet regarding the state funding trends since the Great Recession. He stated that the first version of this document was created by ASMSA in 2015 when Senator Sample was considering a request to increase the School's Revenue Stabilization Act funding. Director Alderdice reminded the Board that ASMSA is primarily funded by the Revenue Stabilization Act funding, which is straight line-item allocation, and EETF (Education Excellence Trust Funding), which is directly correlated to sales use tax collections. He commented that the EETF is "incredibly variable," highlighting that in the three-year cycle between FY09 and FY11, ASMSA shed 10 percent of its operating budget due to the downward economy, and it took until FY15 and FY16 to get back to the pre-recession funding levels. While this trend has changed positively in recent years,

Director Alderdice stated that, in light of recent discourse surrounding the funding for the Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, it is important to begin the funding conversations in earnest while taking a closer look at ASMSA's per pupil expenditures.

Director Alderdice stated that the answer to how ASMSA spends its funding is threefold: first, we need to avoid the simplest method of taking the budget and dividing it by the 250 residential students; secondly, we must consider the thousands of students served annually through STEM Pathways; and thirdly, assess areas unique to ASMSA that require specific investment such as specialized curriculum and exceptional faculty, the residential program experiences and professional staff, outreach and digital learning initiatives, and the School's capital needs. Director Alderdice stated that when the direct residential student expenditures were first calculated at the end of last semester, ASMSA is spending approximately \$27,641 per pupil. Of that total, \$7,789 is attributed directly to the residential mission of ASMSA for things such as meals, live-in staff, security, and other direct programs. He noted that while this is much more than the state baseline of \$7,600 or even the actual expenditure per pupil of \$15,000 recently suggested by Senator Hester, it should not come as a surprise when one considers the specialized mission of ASMSA and its residential component.

In addition, Director Alderdice stated that the 4,000 students and educators being served through ASMSA's STEM Pathways initiative must also be considered. When translating those students to full-time equivalents (FTE), another 550 students are served by ASMSA, bringing the total to 800. If expenditures are then recalculated with the adjusted pupil count, ASMSA's per pupil spending is \$15,762 and in line with the state's average. Director Alderdice commented that being so close to the state's per pupil spending serves as a valuable tool in advocacy for ASMSA because, while the School is a specific investment by the state and by the people of Arkansas in the potential of our students, the cost is not fundamentally different from the commitment the State is already making.

Director Alderdice next shared the first draft of the budget book for FY25. The FY24 budget was shared at the October BOV meeting, but this version presents more current numbers and an opportunity to view the budget line by line. Director Alderdice highlighted the anticipated increase in EETF funding, noting that it currently sits at 2.7% and should end up at a 3% increase for the year. He also noted that there is a line for performance-based merit raises following evaluations this month as ASMSA moves away from cost of living-based salary adjustments.

Director Alderdice also pointed out that ASMSA's fixed costs such as contract services are also increasing. He stated that ASMSA is calculating utilities and contract services at about a 5% increase. Director Alderdice also commented that a large part of this increase has been insurance, stating that higher education has historically underinsured facilities on a self-financed insurance platform. However, higher education is now moving to the state's system, which will raise the School's insurance costs by at least \$125,000. Director Alderdice stated that there aren't any big swings or significant changes expected, but keeping pace with the merit adjustments, contract services and utilities, and the increase in insurance premiums, will account for all of the year's forecasted growth.

Director Alderdice relayed to the Board that Governor Sanders held a press conference recently and announced an indeterminate amount of funding for the Arkansas School for the Deaf and the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. He also stated that in some of his conversations, the ASD and ASBVI costs per pupil were found to be closer to \$100,000. Considering the state of the facilities at both schools and the significantly higher cost per pupil over the state's baseline, funding support for the ASD and ASBVI will require a significant commitment from the state.

Director Alderdice reiterated that it has been 15 years since the state has made a significant investment in ASMSA facilities, and looking forward to the Strategic Plan and campus transformation goals, ASMSA should be seeking at least \$7.5 million in support from the state. Director Alderdice requested that the ASMSA Board of Visitors – especially in their role as gubernatorial appointees – begin to think and work in earnest about how, much like the vocal advocates for the ASD and the ASBVI were able to create a compelling case for the funding for those schools, they might be able to take on similar efforts for ASMSA. He made the distinction that while ASMSA has seen \$35 million in investment opportunities, the School has had to scrape and prioritize along the way, and that had ASMSA not taken the approach it did and prioritized facilities maintenance at the cost of growth, our facilities would be in a similar state to those of the ASD and ASBVI.

Regarding the last item under new business, Director Alderdice reminded the Board of upcoming officer election. He stated that following last year's pattern, the elections would come up at the May meeting and suggested following this pattern moving forward, commenting that moving officer elections to May instead of March gives new appointees time for onboarding.

Dr. Battle agreed that it would be more reasonable for officer elections to move to May.

There was no further discussion.

Ms. Bennett reminded the Board that the 30th Anniversary Gala would be Saturday, May 4th and requested that any members who would like to attend to please purchase their tickets as soon as possible as tables are filling up.

Mrs. Zunick asked where the majority of the table sponsorships were coming from. Ms. Bennett clarified that they were local, listing Allen Tillery Auto and CHI St. Vincent as two current table sponsors. She stated that she has also reached out to other businesses outside of Hot Springs but has not heard back at this time. Director Alderdice commented that in addition to the business-sponsored tables, there have also been tables purchased by individual classes and other alumni groups.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Approved as written _____ Approved as amended _____

Brian Reed
Mr. Brian Reed, Secretary

5-6-24
(Date)