

**SPARKING INNOVATION, IGNITING GROWTH**  
**ASMSA 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**YEAR 4 (2023-24) PROGRESS**

<b>TEACHING AND LEARNING</b>		
<i>Cultivate a culture of dynamic teaching and learning that empowers young people to identify their passions for research, inquiry, and creative expression, develop the self-discipline necessary for success, as well as grow in their identity as emerging practitioners and professionals.</i>		
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
Strategy 1.1: Continue to build on ASMSA’s faculty-supported model for student research, inquiry, and creative expression while seeking out expanded partnerships that engage talented young people with leading scholars, professionals, and organizations.	ASMSA’s collaboration with UAMS continues to create exceptional opportunities for students to engage in meaningful external research programs while also positioning students for presentations and national competitions. Art P.O.D. students now complete a two-course sequence in senior year focusing on portfolio development and studio work.	ASMSA will allocate additional resources for transportation to Little Rock. This should address some of the growing pains associated with the UAMS partnership while opening the doors for expansion through additional UAMS placements or working with partners such as UA-Little Rock, the Little Rock Technology Park, or other entities.
Strategy 1.2: Fully embrace ASMSA’s arts mission by expanding an institutional culture of visual and performing arts through encouraging student talents, abilities, and creativity.	Roughly one-quarter of ASMSA students participated in the wind, string, or choir ensembles this past year--a high mark for the programs. Both the Wind Ensemble and Choir programs took top honors at the state 3A competition. A refreshed approach to choir seems to have resulted in greater student interest.	Discussion of the Music P.O.D. was delayed after a new instructor withdrew prior to the start of the fall semester. With a full complement of faculty and courses available, that conversation will pick up this year. We will continue to define goals and expectations for the choir program to ensure it offers students robust opportunities for study and performance.
Strategy 1.3: Foster inclusive and diverse learning environments through ASMSA’s hiring practices, instructional strategies, and student support systems that remove systemic barriers to equity within our community of learning.	Academic leadership and support staff continue to explore best practices toward course placement and appropriate points of entry into the ASMSA curriculum for students from diverse backgrounds, notably those who may come from under-resourced districts. Faculty continue to refine the chemistry course sequences to position students for success based on prior experiences and longterm STEM goals.	As the HELIX program matures, we will continue to refine the overall curriculum and pathways for students in this experience. The goal continues to be to address this group’s needs while not otherizing these sophomores. Refinements have been made for placement in CARC and first semester math courses. ASMSA will also conduct a research study on college placement and scholarships based on ACT scores.
Strategy 1.4: Focus on faculty growth and continuous improvement by offering expanded professional development, asserting leadership in instructional strategies, identifying contact points to interact with fellow educators, and sharing our best practices with national audiences.	The new \$50,000 teacher salary under the LEARNS Act has created additional pressure to assess our baseline salaries, even with implementation of the Faculty Advancement Plan. Advancement has now resulted in average faculty salaries of \$70,000 per year. Almost two-thirds of faculty have achieved at least one rank of advancement.	With ASMSA’s Cognia 5-year accreditation complete, attention will return to seeking STEM Certification through Cognia. This process is in addition to the usual accreditation and will be led by the Associate Dean for STEM as well as faculty. ASMSA will apply again to seek Exemplary School status from the Arts Schools Network.
Strategy 1.5: Provide valuable and engaging learning opportunities to students, educators, and districts across the state through a diverse portfolio of outreach, enrichment, digital learning, and educator development programs that involve all members of the ASMSA community.	The Office of Admissions piloted the ASMSA-TIP (Talent Identification Program) and served more than 250 7th-grade students in the first year. STEM Pathways set a record of just under 4,000 students and educators served by the program this year. Interest in the Summer@ASMSA programs grew significantly, with 250 applications and commitments to enroll 140 campers.	We expect to see a shift from the concept of “outreach” to “talent development” as ASMSA-TIP enters its second year. The program will expand to include students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades--with out-of-school enrichment programs and parent engagement experiences aligning more closely to this intentionality. Study will continue to how best to leverage the Online Course Choice System that ADE will implement in the 2025-26 academic year.

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<b>STUDENT DEVELOPMENT</b>		
<i>Maximize the full potential of the on-campus experience by affirming the centrality of residential life in creating a living-learning community that connects students beyond the classroom, assists in developing them as whole people, and prepares these future leaders for successful and fulfilling lives through building sustainable skills and mindsets.</i>		
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
Strategy 2.1: Implement a Student Development Curriculum that focuses on social-emotional learning, leadership development, digital citizenship, healthy relationships, and other topics that recognize students' needs as maturing young adults and engaged members of a community.	Student Development programs are still applied more indirectly until we have a full complement of staff in place. Insights from the Challenge Success survey continue to help understand student needs as well as how to prioritize areas of support and engagement.	With a clearer sense of the Student Success Framework in place, we will look for opportunities to both connect and align it with the Student Development Curriculum. One scenario being considered is to build a singular vision for how students are supported and engaged in the across the combined classroom and residential experiences.
Strategy 2.2: Ensure that diversity, equity, inclusion, and mutual respect for all characterize our campus culture and climate.	A variety of data points within the Challenge Success survey data demonstrate ASMSA's leadership among benchmark institutions. Staff educated students and families on the implications of the Given Name Act as well as processes for affirming student's identities within the scope of the state law.	Questions came up this summer on how best to fill gaps for students whose parents are not as engaged in their educational progress as direct advocates. Parents who keep their students' needs in the forefront are great partners; however, we must ensure that all students receive the same levels of proactive support that ensures their success.
Strategy 2.3: Emphasize healthy habits as important components of physical well-being through campus programming and activities that support play, physical development, and balanced nutrition.	ASMSA's food service provider Aladdin brought their dietician to campus multiple times this year for sessions with both students and staff. They continue to receive feedback from campus on dining options that support balanced eating. Club sports like Ultimate Frisbee, soccer, and basketball continue to be areas of student activity with strong interest.	The loss of the Fitness Center in exiting the hospital does create a point of concern for the next few years until a replacement is available. Staff have solicited quotes from local gyms that could still provide space for student exercise and training. A working group on Extracurricular Excellence will continue to explore the role sports and athletics play in the overall student experience and recruitment.
Strategy 2.4: Create an atmosphere conducive to healthy conversations about mental and emotional well-being by providing student-centered services and programs that address the natural challenges of both adolescence and the rigors of the ASMSA experience.	Monthly data on access to mental health programs continue to highlight that nearly half of the student body makes use of these services. Affinity group participation did decline this year, as staff continues to explore ways to create space for these needs.	Academic leadership plans to focus in the year ahead on developing supports that strengthen students' executive functioning skills. ASMSA will follow research and a pilot instrument that is in development by UConn on this topic within gifted and talented students.
Strategy 2.5: Invest in staffing models and resources that reinforce the professionalism of and essential role played by Student Life Staff who employ best practices in fostering an inclusive and engaging residential community.	Staffing live-in Student Life positions continues to be a challenge across all of higher education as well as for ASMSA based on the unique needs of our residential experience. Contributing factors include the lack of staff apartments, not being on a university campus, and desirability of working with minors.	Revisions to the staffing model will be implemented in which REC positions are available to both bachelor's degree holders as well as those with Master's. Operational roles (desk, transportation, etc.) will shift to new jobs to allow for prioritization of student development and parent engagement.
Strategy 2.6: Continue to involve students as full stakeholders in discussions on institutional policy and campus planning so that decision-making is student-centered.	The Student Government Association continues to be excellent partners in seeking feedback and avenues for change on campus policies. The E-Board and "finalization committee" proactively finds common space for agreement on policies.	As attention turns to discussion of a new Fitness Center, we hope to place students in leadership roles for the development of this and other campus spaces. Their voice is essential in the development of the overall 2033 Facilities Plan.

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<b>ENROLLMENT GROWTH</b>		
<i>Expand enrollment to serve more students statewide through targeted growth models that reflect our commitment to stewardship of the public investment in ASMSA.</i>		
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
Strategy 3.1: Work with members of the Arkansas General Assembly, University of Arkansas System, and other ASMSA stakeholders to develop and implement a sustainable funding formula that enables the school to increase enrollment.	ASMSA leadership conducted an analysis of the school's per-pupil expenditures across the residential experience and STEM Pathways. While residential expenses are higher than typical students statewide, the cost is directly attributed to living on campus at no cost. Overall per-pupil across the 750 FTE students by ASMSA is approximately \$15,000, which aligns to state spending.	Amid Governor Sanders' commitment to "fund students not systems", ASMSA hopes to open a conversation to increase funding support in the 95th General Assembly through one of three pathways: a manual increase to RSA to support 40 additional students, a revision to legislation that ties RSA to the roughly \$7,500 per-pupil funding, or alternative models that would allow ASMSA to access the Educational Freedom Accounts.
Strategy 3.2: Strengthen curricular options, methods of engagement, and unique experiences for students in the arts while developing recruitment and admissions procedures directed toward students with specific arts interests.	Academic leadership and SSCs continued to refine the expectations and course pathways for students enrolled in the Visual Arts and Design Program of Distinction (P.O.D.). This framework continues to ensure that students have access to at least 10 arts courses across their ASMSA experience.	As mentioned previously, faculty and academic leadership will continue the exploration of a Music P.O.D. Admissions is exploring ways to best assess student interest in the Art P.O.D. during the application stage through submission of supplemental works for review.
Strategy 3.3: Explore alternative enrollment models such as commuter options and online programs that recognize students' and families' individual needs, thereby increasing access to ASMSA's quality programs.	Ten instructors have completed Advanced Placement Summer Institute (APSI) training in order to gain eligibility to teach AP courses while also using the experience to assess how closely the classes align to the current iterations of concurrent versions of the courses.	All enrollment growth is dependent on specific state funding increases to support additional students with a minimal investment of \$7,500 per student. ASMSA will continue to explore options beyond the residential experience that do not diminish or draw interest away from the residential experience. This discussion includes day/commuter programs well as a fully-online option.
Strategy 3.4: Continue the sophomore early entrance pilot program to determine its overall effectiveness and potential for future expansion as a means of supporting students in need of academic acceleration and intellectual peers.	The Sophomore Work Group completed a preliminary assessment of the Pilot Program, which completed Year 5 and exited that stage in Spring 2024. The sophomore point of entry must continue to maintain higher standards than even typical admission; however, the group continues to evaluate the intentionality and points of differentiation between Early Entrance and HELIX.	Much of the discussion within the Sophomore Work Group has been on how to best reflect the specific needs of the Early Entrance and HELIX students in the "background" of their experience rather than the distinctions being prominent. This switch would reflect the school's approach to our "transitional" and "transformational" paradigm in standard admissions.
Strategy 3.5: Continue to ensure equity in access for geographically, economically, and racially diverse students who face opportunity gaps and do not share the same level of preparatory experiences and support as some of their peers.	Admissions saw an unexpected increase in male candidates for admission, reversing historic trends. School leadership closely followed the US Supreme Court's decision not to hear a case involving Thomas Jefferson HS in Virginia, which is a selective institution and NCSSS peer. TJ's approach is a potential path for still ensuring equity in access.	ASMSA will continue to strive for two-thirds of all counties and all 35 state senatorial districts reflected in enrollment. We will return to conversations about an Associate of Arts pathway that would also mirror transitional scholarships programs between two-year colleges in the UA-System to students enrolling at UA-Fayetteville. ASMSA-TIP programs also seek to create an extended pipeline of students from across the state who may be best positioned for the residential experience.

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<b>ADVOCACY AND PARTNERSHIPS</b>		
<i>Strengthen internal and external partnerships with local, state, and national stakeholders that create committed and vocal advocates for the essential leadership role that ASMSA plays within Arkansas education as well as economic and community development.</i>		
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
Strategy 4.1: Develop a framework for alumni to share perspective and experience that supports students' personal and professional development in addition to institutional advancement.	Monthly email newsletters continue to highlight institutional developments, alumni profiles, student successes, and upcoming campus events of interest to alumni. Focused regional events in Little Rock and northwest Arkansas provided opportunities for alumni to engage in person in addition to the Homecoming weekend event in October. ASMSA has also developed a template for hosting alumni reunions on campus, piloting the approach for the Class of 2014.	The new Coordinator for Annual Giving and Alumni Relations will work with AAFA members to develop a more formalized structure and bylaws for the organization as well as a National Alumni Advisory Council that supports participation by alumni no matter where they live. Campus will also look forward to celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Charter Class's graduation in 2025.
Strategy 4.2: Reinforce to legislators and other leaders the value of the state's commitment to talented young people so that the decision-makers understand their return on investment in ASMSA.	ASMSA hosted local legislators, members of the Board of Trustees, and UA System officials for a campus visit in October 2023. In addition to a luncheon with staff and students, panels highlighted the various facets of the Student Success Framework along with the continued physical transformation of campus.	We will continue to center ASMSA within the school choice conversation that is a priority for state legislators and the Governor. Staff plan to leverage the impact study, cost analysis, and other documents to refine talking points on ASMSA's value proposition for the state.
Strategy 4.3: Utilize the ASMSA Parents Association and Parents Advisory Council to promote direct communication, gain insights on family needs, and represent ASMSA daily in communities across the state.	Monthly PAC sessions via Zoom created space for campus leadership and other staff to openly dialogue with families. Parents played a critical role in providing feedback for analysis as part of the Cognia accreditation.	The ASMSA Foundation will seek to better engage parents in fundraising efforts and other programs. Parents are accustomed to playing a direct role in programmatic funding and support at their sending school as "boosters," which should not change. Parents will also be pivotal in legislative discussions.
Strategy 4.4: Expand ASMSA's position in the Hot Springs community as a hub for educational discussions, cultural enhancement, intellectual debate, and economic development.	As we enter a post-pandemic era, use of the CIC by community groups increased dramatically over the past year. Utilization reached the level campus leaders originally envisioned in developing the Oaklawn Foundation Community Center.	ASMSA will look to expand on partnerships with groups like the Hot Springs Area Community Foundation, Leadership Hot Springs, Documentary Film Festival, Low Key Arts, Cultural Alliance, Sister City Program, and others to develop shared events.
Strategy 4.5: Prioritize fundraising efforts to reflect the ASMSA Foundation's commitment to direct student support, faculty innovation, programmatic development, and facilities needs.	The 30th Anniversary Gala, a new Esports endowment, and headway with new foundation partners were highlights for the year. Philanthropic partners have interest in STEM Pathways as a means of growing impact toward new state investment,	Investment in an Annual Giving Coordinator will allow for additional focus in development efforts. The Foundation Fund Board of Ambassadors will seek to grow members, bringing in new and diverse statewide perspectives. Staff will develop intentional areas to direct alumni giving.
Strategy 4.6: Explore methods to reach varied audiences by using traditional and evolving media to provide a snapshot of daily life and learning on campus, celebrate achievement, and articulate a full narrative of the unique opportunities and experiences available exclusively at ASMSA.	Programming and events associated with the 2024 Solar Eclipse created a variety of opportunities to highlight ASMSA, STEM education, and students interested in astronomy. Two articles highlighting the October campus event in statewide media were points of pride for the year. Democrat-Gazette columnist Rex Nelson also profiled ASMSA in three separate pieces for the Voices section. The KATV college readiness week interviews continued to be meaningful exposure.	ASMSA looks to continue the success of SGA's "Weekly Wave" videos by providing support for content development. Public Affairs will work with Admissions to develop additional authentic, student-produced content. This may include "Instagram takeovers" and other approaches that move beyond purely institution content.

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<b>FACILITIES EXPANSION</b> <i>Grow facilities and implement long-range strategies to meet the needs of expanded enrollment, academic experiences, student life, recreation, and community engagement.</i>		
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
Strategy 5.1: Review and update the Campus Master Plan to redevelop a facilities growth pathway in accordance with institutional needs.	Campuswide discussions continued on broad elements of the 2033 Facilities Plan, though the most pressing issue was the steps to vacate the hospital complex. Survey data from nearly 200 stakeholders highlighted key areas of emphasis in the upcoming plan, with priorities being placed on spaces for visual and performing arts, wellness and physical activity, as well as additional housing to grow enrollment.	Work will continue in earnest on the 2033 Facilities Plan, with a goal to release a physical, digital, and web version in advance of the 95th General Assembly in January 2025. Internal discussions on the plan will pick up in September followed by a preview and discussion with the Board of Visitors in December 2024 and Board of Trustees in early 2025. 2033 was selected as it represents the 40th anniversary of ASMSA
Strategy 5.2: Initiate efforts to expand ASMSA's dedicated arts facilities in collaboration with community partners that lead to the full realization of the school's legislated arts mission.	Outside of small projects as the City navigates the demolition of the hospital complex, the soon to be empty space is eyed specifically for the development of an Arts zone of campus to complement the Residential and Academic zones. Given rising construction costs, the plan would likely include separate Visual and Performing Arts facilities.	Campus leaders and Foundation officials will engage with both local and statewide philanthropists to discuss these needs in the year ahead. Campus will work with on-call architects to solidify preliminary cost estimates for both facilities as well as begin to reach consensus on the size of both facilities.
Strategy 5.3: Formalize steps that will lead to vacating the former hospital complex by creating a plan to transfer teacher offices, maintenance, and other programs to permanent locations using new or existing facilities.	Discussions took place across campus and within individual units on how best to manage the transition of operational offices to the new Campus Administration Building while relocating faculty from the Pine Wing to the current Academic and Administration Building. The move will be completed this August.	A full renovation of the first floor the Academic and Administration Building had to be set aside due to construction delays on the CAB. ASMSA is still positioned to return ownership of the hospital complex to the City of Hot Springs on December 31, 2024. The City has 30 months to complete the demolition. Campus leadership is also exploring renaming the current Academic and Administration Building, which has traditionally been referred to as "Admin."
Strategy 5.4: Expand and create student residences as well as shared and recreational spaces to fully support the emotional, social, physical, and academic needs of students.	An offer was made to purchase the former Mountain Valley Warehouse building along Cedar Street to be used as a future site for a gymnasium; however, the owner accepted an offer from a different group. ASMSA now owns the "Back 40" space behind the Student Center and is exploring turning the area into greenspace for play.	Based on facilities funding for the Schools for the Deaf and Blind, ASMSA will continue to advocate for additional funding toward expanded campus housing. Approximately 4,000 of the 20,000 square feet project would be allocated to either a fitness center or Learning Lab (shared study and collaboration space).
Strategy 5.5: Advocate for the creation of a Public Residential Schools Facilities Fund by the Arkansas General Assembly that brings ASMSA into parity with other public high schools.	ASMSA leadership has continued discussions with University of Arkansas System officials on pursuing this legislation in the upcoming session.	Campus leadership has identified funding support for capital projects as its greatest need from the Board of Visitors in the year ahead, with a goal of engaging with the Governor and local legislators toward proposing a bill for the 95th General Assembly in 2025. ASMSA will study how the bill might benefit other programs such as the Schools for the Deaf and Visually Impaired.