



**ARKANSAS  
SCHOOL**  
FOR MATH,  
SCIENCES,  
+ THE ARTS

# DECEMBER 2021 QUARTERLY REPORT

## **STEM PATHWAYS RECORD ENROLLMENT**

Educator develop and digital learning hybrid program is serving more than 2,000 students statewide this year.

## **CAMPUS MASTER PLAN**

Trustees approve new Administration Building as the next step in the physical transformation of campus.

## **SUMMER ACCELERATION ACADEMY**

Arkansas Out of School Network awards ASMSA a grant to offer online summer learning.





# ARKANSAS SCHOOL

FOR MATH,  
SCIENCES,  
+ THE ARTS

December 1, 2021

To the Members of ASMSA's Community of Learning:

There are some days where it's easy to forget that we remain in the middle of a global pandemic. To the credit of our students, faculty, and staff, ASMSA has been able to achieve some kind of equilibrium amid this "new normal."

According to a report from the Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE) and Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), ASMSA continues to lead the state's institutions of higher learning in vaccination. The November 2021 report notes 94.0% of students and 85.5% of employees have received at least one dose of the vaccine. UAMS comes in next in student vaccination at 74.55%. The University of Arkansas at Fayetteville is next in line for faculty vaccination at 83.5%.

As fortunate as our community of learning has been this semester thanks to best practices, the use of masks, and the highest student vaccination rate in the state, the arrival of winter and emerging concern over the Omicron variant is a reminder that we must continue to be cautious.

There remains uncertainty--but perhaps far less so than this time last year. Twelve months ago, we were transitioning to remote learning to finish the year. Such measures are not necessary this year because of the way we have continued to exhibit shared responsibility. And while the emotional and mental weight of the pandemic cannot be discounted, our collective commitment to perseverance serves as a daily inspiration and reminder of why this school is such a special place. Time and again, our community of learning has made the commitment to keep each other safe.

In this season of gratitude and celebration, that's definitely something for which we can all be thankful.

Sincerely,

Corey Alderdice  
ASMSA Director

**A CAMPUS OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF  
ARKANSAS SYSTEM**

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**Office of the Director**  
**December 2021 Quarterly Report**  
**Corey Alderdice, ASMSA Director**

**By the Numbers**

- According to a report from the Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE) and Arkansas Department of Health (ADH), ASMSA continues to lead the state's institutions of higher learning in vaccination. The November 2021 report notes 94.0% of students and 85.5% of employees have received at least one dose of the vaccine.
- 31% of ASMSA students this year are students of color. 30% of students this year qualify for free and reduced lunch.
- The five-year college matriculation rate for the Classes of 2017 through 2021 includes some interesting trends. 60% of graduates are continuing their education at an Arkansas college or university. 35% are studying at a University of Arkansas System institution. 38% are attending college out of state, and 2% have other plans.

**Facilities and Campus Master Planning**

Renovation work on the former Chapel and Convent continues with an estimated project completion date in late July 2022. Staff have been conducting monthly owner, architect, and contractor (OAC) meetings to assess the progress and make adjustments. The University of Arkansas Board of Trustees offered approval on the revised project cost of \$5.5 million during the November 2021 meeting.

At that same meeting, the Trustees granted project approval for the \$3 million new Administration Building. Harris Architects of Hot Springs was selected as the design firm for the project and will begin work in early 2022. The facility will move administrative functions (Director, finance, HR, public affairs, development, and admissions) to a new space while allowing faculty to transition from the Pine Street Wing back to the campus' primary academic zone.

Director Alderdice recently met with City of Hot Springs staff about a potential transfer of additional campus lots currently under city ownership. These parcels include the courtyard in front of the Student Center, the service drive along Pine Street, and the large lot behind the Student Center parking lot. The school has sought updated appraisals as well as surveys for these lots. The goal would be to have the transfer approved during the May 2022 Trustees meeting.

**COVID-19 Update**

Ongoing updates are available at <https://www.asmsa.org/asmsa-covid-19-updates/>.

To date, the school has experienced only five total student cases of COVID-19. After cases peaked in early September, ASMSA had no cases for the next two months. An employee tested positive the week before Thanksgiving.

The COVID-19 Workgroup continues to meet as needed to assess campus policy and make adjustments. Additional time away from campus as well as the restoration of weekends at home

have been positive adjustments over the course of the semester. The school's high vaccination rate among both students and employees as well as the continuation of a campus mask mandate have helped create confidence in these adjustments.

### **AOSN Awards Grant for Summer Acceleration Academy**

ASMSA received a \$26,235 grant to develop and implement the Summer Acceleration Academy from the Arkansas Department of Education's Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Arkansas State University and the Arkansas Out of School Network. ASMSA's Summer Acceleration Academy will provide online learning in STEM disciplines that work to eliminate opportunity gaps that exist for students in districts across the state which limit their pathways to advanced science and math coursework. Courses will include geometry, trigonometry, economics, and computer science and serve about 125 students.

Students will earn full high school credit for the courses and be better positioned to take advantage of advanced opportunities later in high school such as Advanced Placement courses while also increasing their readiness for college and access to STEM-based careers. By offering rigorous and meaningful courses over the summer, students not only can accelerate their learning but also participate in intellectual opportunities that stave off learning loss. The grant is potentially renewable for an additional two years based on program outcomes.

The grant is part of American Rescue Plan ESSER III federal relief funding that was allocated to mitigate student learning loss as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and support social emotional development, according to a release from the Arkansas Out of School Network. (ASON). The initiative awarded \$5.2 million to 44 afterschool, summer, and extended-year learning programs across the state. Awardees included school districts and community-based partnership programs such as public libraries, nonprofit organizations, career, and technical programs, faith-based organizations and institutions of higher learning. Each awardee submitted grant applications that described how they would utilize grant awards to address the academic impact of lost instructional time on student learning through evidence-based summer programs and comprehensive afterschool programs.

### **STEM Pathways Sets Record Enrollment**

ASMSA's STEM Pathways initiative set an enrollment record this year, serving more than 2,000 students across the state in its Computer Science Plus and Advanced Biology Plus cohorts. There are 1,678 computer science students statewide enrolled in this year's Coding Arkansas' Future cohorts. Those numbers represent about 15 percent of the statewide computer science enrollment. This year's cohorts includes 51 teachers in the Computer Science Plus Year 1 program and 27 teachers in Computer Science Plus Year 2. The Advanced Biology Plus program is serving 439 students and 43 teachers statewide.

The STEM Pathways program began in 2015 with the creation of the Coding Arkansas' Future initiative. That program offered high schools across the state the opportunity to expand their computer science curriculum while receiving guidance and professional development from ASMSA staff members. While ASMSA instructors taught some computer science courses for schools through digital learning, the main emphasis was preparing educators to become computer science teachers through the Computer Science Plus program.

That included offering summer boot camps to introduce teachers to computer science. Those teachers received guidance throughout the school year from ASMSA, including continuing professional development through weekly video meetings and a follow-up camp at the conclusion of the academic year. The goal was to prepare those educators to earn their license to teach computer science while also becoming the primary computer science teacher at their school.

The program expanded in recent years to offer a middle school coding block and the Advanced Biology Plus program. In the Advanced Biology Plus program, instructors around the state receive professional development from ASMSA's life science specialists in the instruction of AP Biology. ASMSA's biology teachers guide camps prior to the beginning of the school year. They then help educators prepare their curriculum for the year and provide unique lab learning activities that the individual schools may not be able to offer otherwise. STEM Pathways will further expand in the 2022-23 academic year by adding an Advanced Statistics Plus cohort. Advanced Statistics Plus will provide mathematics educators across the state the same type of guidance in teaching Advanced Placement Statistics as biology instructors receive in the Advanced Biology Plus cohorts for AP Biology.

### **Students Recognized with Arkansas Seal of Biliteracy**

Eleven Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts students earned the Arkansas Seal of Biliteracy by demonstrating proficiency in English and at least one other language before graduating high school. The Arkansas Seal of Biliteracy is awarded each spring and fall to students in ninth through 12th grades and is sponsored by the Arkansas Foreign Language Teachers Association and the Arkansas Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. The Arkansas Department of Education officially endorsed the seal in June 2018.

There were 403 high school students from 24 Arkansas school districts and charter, private or virtual schools, and home schoolers who earned the recognition this fall.

ASMSA students who earned recognition this spring were: Connor Bailey, a senior from Paragould, Spanish; Rose Brown, a junior from Donaldson, French; Shawn Chen, a senior from Little Rock, Japanese; Grecia Gonzalez, a senior from Fort Smith, Spanish; Avery Goodrich, a senior from Conway, French; Lauralee Jarrett, a senior from Brinkley, French; Myka Shepherd, a senior from Hot Springs Village, French; Joshua Stallings, a senior from Little Rock, French; Jayita Ujjaini, a senior from Jonesboro, Spanish; Cadence Ventress, a senior from Benton, Spanish; and Tami Weng, a senior from Sherwood, Chinese.

The tests for the seal are conducted in the fall and spring. Students who apply for the Seal of Biliteracy must complete an application in which they submit evidence of their proficiency in both languages. Students can use their seal of recognition on college and job applications to show future employers and admissions offices that they are proficient in two or more languages. The seal is notional recognized. As of 2019, 35 states have an official Seal of Biliteracy and 12 more were on their way to having their own seal, according to information from the Arkansas Seal of Biliteracy Committee. For more information on the program, visit [arbiliteracy.org](http://arbiliteracy.org).

## **11 ASMSA Seniors named Questbridge National College Match Finalists**

Eleven Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts seniors have been selected as QuestBridge National College Match Finalists. QuestBridge is a nonprofit organization that connects exceptional low-income youth with leading institutions of higher education. QuestBridge works with top universities across the country to offer four-year, full scholarships to deserving students who may otherwise be unable to afford to attend those institutions.

QuestBridge partnered this year with 45 colleges and universities to offer scholarships at institutions such as Duke University, Rice University, Stanford University and others. Students apply for the scholarships through the Common Application, which is used by many educational institutions for admission. QuestBridge applicants write an essay to accompany the application. They may list up to 12 of the partner schools at which they would like to be considered for admission.

ASMSA seniors who were selected as QuestBridge National College Match Finalists for 2022 are Alyx Allred of Harrison, Cameryn Berryhill of Evening Shade, Trey Clark of Harrison, Alyssia Davis of Beebe, Ash Hong of North Little Rock, Aidan Jackson of Star City, Meadow Kelly of Fayetteville, Ervonica Smith of Delaware, Ark., Joshua Stallings of Little Rock, Jayita Ujjaini of Jonesboro, and Cadence Ventress of Benton.

Finalists who receive a match will be notified on Dec. 1. Finalists who do not receive a match for a scholarship will still be eligible to be considered for regular admission to partner schools and may still receive financial aid in the future. In 2020, more than 1,400 Finalists were matched and approximately 2,000 Finalists were admitted through QuestBridge Regular Decision, according to the QuestBridge website.

## **Krakowiak Named PAEMST Finalist**

Dr. Patrycja Krakowiak, a life sciences instructor at the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts, has been named a 2021 state finalist for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Krakowiak is one of six teachers statewide who were named state finalists for the national teaching award. Forty-seven teachers were nominated for the honor, according to a release from the Arkansas Department of Education Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The award recognizes outstanding science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) teachers who have demonstrated a commitment to professional development, innovative teaching techniques and technology in their classroom. The program is conducted by the National Science Foundation on behalf of The White House.

Krakowiak is one of three state finalists for recognition in the science category. There are three finalists in the mathematics category. A national committee of scientists, mathematicians and educators will review the applications and recommend up to 108 teachers to receive the award. Winners are chosen from each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. territories and schools operated in the United States and overseas by the Department of Defense Education Activity.

### **Alderdice Reappointed to Board of NCSSS**

ASMSA Director Corey Alderdice was recently reappointed to the National Consortium of Secondary STEM Schools Board of Directors. NCSSS was established in 1988 to provide a forum for specialized secondary schools focused on science, technology, engineering and mathematics to exchange information and program ideas. It now includes more than 75 member schools, many “ranked” as the best in the country, along with several associate, affiliate and corporate members comprised of colleges, universities, summer programs, foundations and corporations.

### **Director of Finance Search**

Ashley Smith resigned as Director of Finance effective December 1, 2021, to take a position with the University of Arkansas System’s Project One team. The group is responsible for implementation of the Workday finance, HCR, and student information systems across the System’s various campuses, units, and divisions. Whitney Moore will serve as the Interim Director of Finance. A search is currently underway with interviews taking place in December for a successor. The school will use this transition to assess a variety of campus operations and make adjustments as recommended.

**Academic Affairs**  
**December 2021 Quarterly Report**  
**Stuart Flynn, Dean of Academics**

*During October and November, the academic support team focused on academic interventions, college planning, and Spring 2022 scheduling. Work on Science Fair projects has intensified as students prepare for the February event. Our Teaching & Learning Committee has continued discussions regarding the details of a remote-only option for prospective ASMSA students next school year, and our Departmental Chairs have been working with a campus subcommittee to finalize details of our faculty advancement plan, which we plan to implement next Fall.*

**By the Numbers**

- 59 colleges and universities attended the 2021 on-campus College Fair.
- 3 concerts presented by Dr. Tom Dempster and his music ensembles.
- 5 students recognized in the 2021 Historic Cane Hill Art Exhibition and Competition.
- 11 students earned the Arkansas Seal of Biliteracy.

**Faculty Advancement Plan**

Last year, we completed work on a faculty handbook, which established baselines for expectations, and this year our work has focused on developing a detailed plan that includes an application process with a variety of point values across several core areas. Interested teachers will be able to pursue salary advancements through the new system starting in Fall 2022, and applications will be considered by a review committee.

**Library Initiatives**

Our new Head Librarian, Rachel Smith, is interested in expanding the library's role in student research and study skill development. She and I have discussed and will continue to discuss a variety of learning opportunities she would like to offer students. Our plan is to offer these sessions during student orientation and at intervals during the school year.

**College Planning**

This cycle is our first under the guidance of our new Assistant Dean of College Counseling, Bret Vallun, and so far both students and parents have expressed appreciation for Bret's organizational strategies and his insight into the overall process. With the new arrangement, all seniors work with Bret to develop individual plans and timelines, and going forward he intends to further refine a calendar of steps and dates that all students and families can use.



**Office of Student Life**  
**December 2021 Quarterly Report**  
**Rheo Morris, Ph.D., Dean of Students**

*The ASMSA office of Student Life has remained vigilant in our fight against COVID-19 community spread. With the expansion of our support team and SEL programming, we have been able to provide extensive support mechanisms for our students. We are geared up to hit the recruitment trail in January for an Assistant Dean, Residential Experience Coordinator, and Residential Mentor positions.*

**By the Numbers**

- 94% of our student population is fully vaccinated.
- We have had zero cases of community spread in the Student Center through the residential experience.
- 111 students have participated in mental health services since the beginning of the school year.

**Residential Curriculum**

The Residential Life staff has been focusing programming, events, and interactions based on Social Emotional Learning (SEL). Our Educational goals and focus areas are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Self-awareness is the ability to accurately recognize one's emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset." Our goal is for our students to develop the ability to develop accurate self-perception, recognize their strengths, develop self-confidence, and create self-efficacy.

Self-management is the ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thought, and behaviors in different situations, effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. It is also the ability to set and work toward personal and Academic goals. Our goal is for students to develop impulse control, self-discipline, and organizational skills. We would like them to learn skills to manage stress, focus on self-motivation, and participate in goal-setting.

Social-awareness is the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and support. Our goal is for our students to learn perspective-taking, appreciate diversity, learn respect for others, and understand empathy.

Relationship skills is the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed. Our goal is for students to learn active communication and teamwork. We would like them to exhibit social engagement and practice healthy relationship-building.

Responsible decision making is the ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others. Our students will learn how to identify problems and how to solve those problems. They will learn the ability to analyze situations, evaluate decisions and reflect on those decisions and their consequences.

### **Staffing Challenges**

Our department along with any residential programs at institutions like ours and in higher education has been plagued with live-in staff challenges. We are currently understaffed as we have lost several integral staff members to relocations. We have been actively searching for 2 female Residential Experience Coordinators, 1 male Residential Mentor, and an Assistant Dean of Residence Life. The official recruitment season for live-in staff begins in January with several Placement Exchanges and our plan is to participate at all. Our current staff has gone above and beyond to ensure that our service is not visibly affected.

### **Security RFP**

ASMSA issued a request for proposal (RFP) for our security services since the current contract period ended. There were four security companies who submitted bids including the incumbent firm. The committee evaluated each proposal based on experience, and method and approach. Securitas emerged as our new service provider effective December 1<sup>st</sup> at midnight.

**Office of Admissions and Outreach**  
**December 2021 Quarterly Report**  
**Charlie Feick, Director of Admissions**

*This year's application cycle officially began on September 15, 2021. During the past quarter admissions staff members have been visiting students in their communities throughout the state. We have also welcomed students to campus through our MASH-ups, Dolphin<sup>XPs</sup>, and Preview Days. The upwARd promise deadline for students to receive a free voucher to take the February ACT is December 1, 2021.*

**By the Numbers**

- 143 students have started their application as of November 30, 2021.
- 356 interest forms have been submitted between August 1, 2021 and November 30, 2021.
- Staff members visited 232 junior high and high schools this cycle.
- More than 1200 students completed reply cards/school visit forms during school visits this cycle.
- 102 students have engaged with ASMSA through an admissions event – 71 on campus and 31 online

**Increased Attendance by Event Registrants**

Preview Days have had an increase in attendance so far this application cycle. We have engaged with 65 students and their families at Preview Days this year, up from 52 students and their families at this time last year.

General Online Information Sessions have also experienced an increase in attendance. Last year 74% of folks who registered for an online information session then attended it; this year 96% of those who registered have attended. This year we have had folks register for the general online information sessions through Zoom so that it automatically sends them the Zoom link to attend the session.

**ASMSA Across the State**

Admissions staff members have been able to return to visiting schools across the state this year after primarily doing virtual visits last year. Connecting with students in their home communities provides an opportunity for us to begin to learn about who they are and what their goals are as well as the ability to better understand the context of their area of the state. It also allows students to create a personal connection with their admissions representative which corresponds to a higher number of students who reach out to us compared to those whose school visit is virtual. So far this year staff members visited 232 junior high and high schools and more than 1200 students have completed reply cards/school visit forms during school visits.

**ASMSA at NCSSS Conference**

Outreach Coordinator, Amy Brown-Westmoreland, was able to attend the National Consortium of Secondary STEM Schools conference this past November. During this conference, Amy was able to meet other admissions representatives and outreach personnel from sister schools and learn more about their own admissions processes and outreach programs. A particularly helpful session was hosted by the Illinois Math and Science Academy where participants did a hands-on

session exploring one of their "snack boxes," which are free, downloadable instructions using simple materials for families and educators. A through line of the conference was understanding the food production industry as a scientific industry with a distinct mission of feeding the world, and using that information to help students think of this area as a potential career.

**Office of Institutional Advancement**  
**December 2021 Quarterly Report**  
**Sara Brown, Ph.D., Director of Institutional Advancement**

*The ASMSA Office of Institutional Advancement ended the 2021 fiscal year reaching a major milestone within the ASMSA Foundation Fund. The Office of Institutional Advancement continues to connect with alumni, donors, and sponsors through our Annual Fall Golf Classic and #GivingTuesday events. In September, the Greater Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce D.C. Fly-in provided an opportunity to connect with local and state legislators as well as federal dignitaries. In addition, we continue to work with external stakeholders through grant opportunities that support ASMSA programs and students.*

**By the Numbers**

- The University of Arkansas Foundation, Inc. Statement of Activities Report for fiscal year 2022 (7/1/21 through 11/30/21) includes total gifts received of \$39,715, total interest received of \$16,537, and a total fund balance of \$1,019,667.
- ASMSA Foundation raised \$8,417 through #GivingTuesday.
- New \$6,000 endowed student award created to recognize exceptional achievements within the science discipline.
- \$10,000 grant from the Women’s Foundation of Arkansas received for an Equity in Computer Science Summit; \$10,000 from Oaklawn Foundation for Wellness fund; \$1,000 Giving Tree Grant for the CS Summit; \$1,500 Elisabeth Wagner Foundation for the Arts Department.

**ASMSA Foundation**

The ASMSA Foundation’s permanent endowment crossed a major milestone by reaching \$500,000 in total assets for the first time since the fund was created in March 2007. Several gifts this past year have established new endowments to recognize student achievement among the graduating seniors and to expand opportunities for summer fellowships for rising seniors. Endowments build lasting financial strength, ensure academic quality, and establish planned long-term stability for ASMSA.

**2021 Arkansas Fall Golf Classic**

The 8<sup>th</sup> annual Arkansas Fall Golf Classic event hosted by the Greater Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce was held on Friday, October 1 at the Hot Springs Country Club. The event had 40 sponsors with 25 teams, and raised gross proceeds of \$26,235. The 2022 event will be held on September 30.

**Coordinator for Alumni & Community Relations**

In January 2022, we will welcome a new Coordinator for Alumni and Community Relations. The coordinator will provide general support to ASMSA’s effort to engage with alumni nationwide, collaborate to grow the Association for Alumni & Friends of ASMSA, strengthen relationships with statewide partners, and advance ASMSA’s giving programs that result in private philanthropy.

**Student Government Association**  
**December 2021 Quarterly Report**  
**Claire Green, SGA President**  
**Presented by Danielle Luyet, SGA Vice President**

*We have had a busy first semester, and I think everyone has been pleasantly surprised how few Covid interruptions we have experienced. Our Wellness Committee planned several activities around World Mental Health Day in October. Students are still contributing to our kindness wall that we began that week. Students use sticky notes to write encouraging notes to other students. Activities committee sponsored spirit week in the days leading up to Halloween. Themes included Monday at the Museum (decade day), Twin Tuesday (with an opposite option), Wild Wednesday (jungle theme), Faculday Thursday (dress like your favorite teacher) and Fan Friday (show support for your favorite anything). We also sponsored a Halloween door-decorating contest. Our Food Committee reported the cafeteria is working with two students in the Research in the Park class to begin a composting program to benefit the school pollinator garden. The staff is saving scraps from the kitchen. Our Finance Committee approved spending requests from the Young Medical Professionals for mask making supplies, from Grandma Club for Rainbow Loom materials and from GEO (Geologic, Environmental, and Oceanographic) Club for a trip to North Little Rock to see the gardens featuring native plants at the St. Joseph Center. We also purchased supplies for the Candyland winter formal dance. The dance had not happened as of the writing of this report, but preparing for it has been one of our focuses for several weeks. Like at prom last year, we planned to include a sensory-friendly room for students who want or need to take a break from the lights and sounds. While the juniors took their PSAT in October, I led a senior meeting where seniors picked our class song, motto and flower. We had our first Town Hall on Oct. 18, and planning for our next town hall is underway. We have tried to update our Instagram page, and our two student appointees on the Covid Work Group have been successful in continuing to advocate for us. Most recently they persuaded the group to extend the window for students to check out and return to campus to 8 p.m. from 6:30 p.m. Our advisor, Adrian Tharpe, a residential experience coordinator, is leaving the school. We are in the process of finding a replacement. When we return in January, we will have elections for floor and class representatives. We moved to a one-semester election cycle last year. It was part of an effort to increase student involvement and engagement.*

### **Wellness Week**

Wellness Committee has continued to focus this year on normalizing discussion and seeking help for mental health concerns. We launched an awareness campaign around world mental health day, which was Oct. 10. We are in the process of planning a wellness spirit week somewhat like the regular spirit week we had at the end of October but with a focus on emotional health. Some of the ideas we have tossed around include themes like Motivation Monday or Mindfulness Tuesday. We want students to know that everyone struggles from time to time with feeling sad or discouraged, but that it's important to recognize when you are having a rough time and take action before you become overwhelmed. We also want people to know how to reach out for help if they need it.

### **Senior Class Picks**

While the juniors were taking the PSAT in October, the seniors met in the cafeteria to choose our class motto, song, and flower. After some discussion, we settled on a motto of "No worries! It's just a two-week break." It refers to the start of the pandemic when everyone thought we only needed a short time before returning to normal. Our class song will be "We Didn't Start the Fire," by Billy Joel. The reason students seemed drawn to it (I think, it wasn't my personal choice) was because we have enough perspective now to realize every generation has unprecedented events that make them question and struggle and hopefully come out stronger for the experience in the end. It's affirming to know we aren't the only ones who have felt like we are graduating in unprecedented times. All times are in their own way unprecedented. Plus, we are thinking about writing to Billy Joel and seeing if he will engage with us or send us a note or video greeting. Our class flower is the skullcap, which is in the mint family and features blue or purple flowers which when fully mature have a caplike appearance. It was important to several of us that we select a native, non-invasive plant. Skullcap grows wild in the woods and sometimes is used in teas or as a tincture.

**Association for Alumni & Friends of ASMSA**  
**December 2021 Quarterly Report**  
**Amy Stvartak ('11), AAFA Executive Board**

*AAFA successfully hosted another successful virtual Homecoming event on October 9, with several professors making guest appearances. We are also collecting nominations for speakers for this year's Alumni Pathways Series. Finally, AAFA is thrilled to be assisting with the search for the first ASMSA Coordinator for Alumni and Community Relations.*

### **Homecoming**

Homecoming took place on October 9, 2021. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, AAFA made the decision, in coordination with ASMSA administration and several individual classes having reunions this year, to cancel in-person events for Homecoming 2021 and switch to a virtual model like the one used in 2020.

### **Alumni Pathways Speaker Series**

Last year saw fantastic virtual presentations by three very accomplished alumni as part of AAFA's Alumni Pathways Speaker Series. AAFA is currently seeking nominations for this year's series, which we hope to again host virtually in the Spring of 2022.

### **ASMSA Coordinator for Alumni and Community Relations**

ASMSA, in coordination with the AAFA, has made the decision to hire its first Coordinator for Alumni and Community Relations. The successful candidate will work under the umbrella of the ASMSA Foundation, assisting the AAFA with coordination of alumni events, student mentorship and outreach efforts among other duties associated with the position. The AAFA executive team is very grateful to the ASMSA administration for taking this important step and will be assisting with the selection of candidates for the role.