

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

March 6th, 2023

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

Mr. Barnes convened the Board of Visitors regular meeting into open session at 5:10 p.m. and welcomed all Board members.

II. ESTABLISH QUORUM

Members Present

Mr. Timothy Barnes, Chair (Zoom)
 Mr. Brian Reed, Secretary
 Ms. Mary Alice Chambers
 Dr. Marlene Battle ('97), Pharm.D.
 Mrs. Mary Zunick

Members Absent

Mr. Gary Dowdy

Ex-Officio Members Present

Mrs. Krystal Nail, Program Director,
 Division of Elementary & Secondary
 Education Learning Services, Office
 of Gifted and Talented Placement
 Dr. Tom Dempster, President,
 Governing Council
 Dr. Kyle Day, Ph.D., Chair,
 Parents Advisory Council
 Ms. Talana Small, ('22) President,
 Student Government Association
 Mr. Patrick Ralston, Director, Arkansas
 Arts Council (Zoom)

Ex-Officio Members Absent

Ms. Jennifer Fowler ('04), Director, Arkansas
 National Science Foundation EPSCoR
 Dr. Maria Markham, Ph.D., Director,
 Arkansas Division of Higher Education
 Mrs. Amy Stvartak ('11), Chair of the
 Association for Alumni and Friends of ASMSA

Administrative Members Present

Mr. Corey Alderdice, Director
 Stuart Flynn, J.D., Dean of Academic Affairs
 Dr. Rheo Morris, Ph.D., Dean of Students
 Mr. Jason Hudnell, Director of Admissions
 Mrs. Whitney Moore, Director of Finance
 Ms. Cara Wilsey, Administrative Assistant

Administrative Members Absent

Mrs. Nia Rieves, Director of Human Resources
 & Campus Culture

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Barnes called the meeting to order and stated that a quorum had been established. Ms. Chambers asked for a motion to approve the December 12, 2022, meeting minutes. This motion was seconded by Mr. West. The motion was passed unanimously.

IV. SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Director Alderdice welcomed Mr. Robert Bryant, the Coordinator for Alumni and Community Relations. Mr. Bryant previously worked for ASMSA in the early 90s as a student life staff member before later serving as Director of Admissions at the Missouri Academy. Director Alderdice stated that the School hopes to make an investment in alumni programming and community outreach and that Mr. Bryant was a natural fit for the role.

In furthering that goal, one of Mr. Bryant's more significant projects has been updating the 2008 Economic Impact Study. Mr. Bryant thanked Director Alderdice for his kind introduction and stated that he was excited to talk about the impact of ASMSA, especially in light of the School's upcoming 30th Anniversary. Mr. Bryant shared that ASMSA is working with the Boyette Agency and that data, including employment statistics and capital investments, from 2017-2021 was provided. Boyette analyzed this data through different parameters such as stockholder engagement, qualitative research, and an economic impact model. Mr. Bryant defined these terms as they were used for the study as qualitative research being, "What we do with the numbers, what they report and what they reveal," and the stockholder engagement as, "What do the people say? What has their experience been like?"

Boyette also considered aspects such as income tax application, labor, income, and benefits. For the qualitative research, Mr. Bryant stated that there were four focus groups: the leadership team; a faculty group; alumni, who Boyette described as "impressive," giving one Boyette employee "chills while she [alumna] described ASMSA"; and parents of current students. Mr. Bryant stated that the parent focus group was one area he planned to further develop before the study is finalized and that he has reached out to parents of male students to share their experiences and how their son has adapted as the current information shared from the parents of female students was incredible.

Upon reflection of the preliminary report, Mr. Bryant stated that it would hard to say that ASMSA "has been a burden," to Hot Springs, and that, "in fact, the School's presence has been an asset and is something very different from any other program in the state." He referenced the School's excellent reputation and cited some of successes in the study, such as the 92,000 Capstone community service hours completed, the number of National Merit finalists who attended ASMSA, the 68 out of the 75 Arkansas counties represented at the School, and some of the newer pilot programs such as HELIX. Mr. Bryant stated that while ASMSA is fortunate because the students who attend want to be here, with competition rising from all parts of the state, we have to ask ourselves what is it that we do differently and what value do we add? The Board agreed that ASMSA has a

consistently positive reputation with Ms. Chambers stating that many of the remarks recorded in the study were things she had heard herself over her 20 years with the School. Following a question by Mrs. Zunick about whether the impact in counties beyond Garland County would be studied, Mr. Bryant said not at this time as this study was primarily focused on ASMSA's impact to Garland County and the state as a whole.

Director Alderdice elaborated on the reasoning behind the Garland County focus, stating that while the various aspects studied in the impact report are felt throughout the state, there have been challenges with the City of Hot Springs regarding their ongoing commitment, and that it will be beneficial to have this hard data to refer to as ASMSA exits the hospital. Mr. Bryant stated that the impact study will be shared once it is complete but to share any questions with himself or Corey to be passed along to the agency. Director Alderdice confirmed that the study would hopefully be finalized in March and that feedback is appreciated and welcomed. Boyette will also condense the information to a "top five" report of the most relevant takeaways from the report. Chairman Barnes thanked Mr. Bryant for his leadership and direction on the impact study and stated that he was excited to see the completed study.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Director's Report - Corey Alderdice

Director Alderdice welcomed new staff members Cara Wilsey and Jason Hudnell in person. Ms. Wilsey is the new executive assistant, and Mr. Hudnell is the new Director of Admissions having previously served as the Dean of Enrollment and Director of Athletics at National Park College. Director Alderdice reported that the Board of Trustees approved the Faculty Advancement Plan recommendations and that 14 faculty members earned Instructor of Excellence, the highest rank, and the accompanying \$10,000 salary increase beginning January 1st. He thanked Dean Flynn and Nia Rieves as well as the faculty members of the academic leadership team and the Governing Council for their work getting everyone through the first condensed cycle. Director Alderdice reported that the next cycle will have an extended timeline this fall, and that the new recommendations will be considered by the Board of Trustees in their March 2024 meeting.

Concerning progress in campus facilities, Director Alderdice drew attention to the construction changes on the hillside for the new Admin Building. He reported that the contractor has given a timeline of the end of 2023 for completion but expects a more realistic deadline of March. Director Alderdice stated that the plan is to use Spring Break and after the students leave in May of next year to transition into the new Administration Building.

Director Alderdice highlighted two recent grants. The Oaklawn Foundation gave \$100,000 for the renovation of Selig Hall, and Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield Blue & You Foundation gave \$75,000 towards a campus greenspace and vertical container farm. This container garden and greenspace will hopefully provide more agricultural

opportunities for the environmental science program as well as introduce farm-to-school elements and gardening health benefits to the students. In reference to a question from Ms. Chambers regarding the community kitchen in Selig Hall, Director Alderdice reported that because of the challenges caused by the lack of kitchen space in the housing for residential staff, renovations are currently being completed for Dr. Jno-Finn's apartment, and there have been discussions about retrofitting a parallel space on the third floor of the student center to provide a community kitchen there as well. Director Alderdice reported that discussions between ASMSA and the City of Hot Springs have continued regarding the roof renovations on the current Administration building. A compromise was reached with the School undertaking the payment of the roof replacement. While the financing was not able to make it onto the December or January ACC meeting agendas, it was recently approved, and the renovation should begin in the next few weeks. Director Alderdice shared that the roof replacement, elevator replacement, HVAC system replacement, updating and tethering the fire alarm and monitoring system to the universal hub and student center, and the filtered water station installation equal about \$1 million in infrastructure investments to the current Administration Building over the last three years.

Student Government Association—Talana Small

Ms. Small reported that the SGA had held a few events, the most recent being "Standardized Resting" during the Science Fair and national testing dates. She stated that there had been a few bills regarding what can be plugged in at the dorms after a few hotplate issues. Ms. Small noted that SGA is currently gearing up to start executive elections.

Parent Association Committee—Kyle Day

Dr. Day stated that it would be helpful for parents with graduating seniors to receive an email reminder about graduation. Director Alderdice informed that there is an end of year planning document currently being updated that usually goes out after Spring Break and that it can maybe go out earlier in the future.

Governing Council—Dr. Tom Dempster

Dr. Dempster reiterated that the Governing Council's focus for the end of last semester and beginning of this semester was to create a letter to the Arkansas General Assembly to request an ad hoc adjustment to the Revenue Stabilization Act and better support baseline salaries for ASMSA faculty. Dr. Dempster mentioned that it is unclear at this time what will come of the letter and how it fits in with the LEARNS Act as it progresses; however, all of the affinity and stakeholder groups signed off and the letter has been sent out.

The Governing Council has also requested additional school vehicles and the previously mentioned filtered water fountains for the current Administration Building with work to begin soon on the water fountains. Dr. Dempster reported that the Governing Council is currently reviewing the Employee Handbook and beginning to review the ASMSA Constitution. He stated that while there are some minor grammatical changes that have been found, the main purpose of the review is to make sure that what is in the Employee Handbook harmonizes with what is in the Constitution regarding processes and procedures, particularly regarding curriculum. Dr. Dempster expressed that the Constitution review will be more of a multi-year process but that the Governing Council wanted to start now so that any additions or changes that are implemented have a secure footing. He stated that the Governing Council plans to meet after Spring Break.

Director Alderdice clarified Dr. Dempster's point on the direct impact of the LEARNS Act on ASMSA, specifically concerning the teacher salary raise, stating that the letter drafted by the Governing Council is intended so that legislators "keep ASMSA in mind," and as the specific advocacy for a potential manual RSA adjustment that will happen towards the end of the Session even though schools like ASMSA aren't specifically mentioned.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Barnes addressed the nominations and elections for the 2023-2024 Board of Visitors and requested that the nominations and elections be tabled until the May meeting. A motion was made by Dr. Battle to delay the elections and seconded by Ms. Chambers. Motion was passed unanimously. A date will be set for a special meeting to discuss nominations later this month.

Director Alderdice highlighted a few of the provisions included in the LEARNS Act, specifically the digital learning components and the Educational Freedom Accounts. He opined that these sections present the most opportunity for ASMSA growth, especially in broadening the digital offerings and scope that has narrowed somewhat as digital learning in Arkansas has evolved. He also noted that as the language in Sections 20 and 42 indicated per-pupil funding, it was originally hoped to be an avenue to pursue this per-pupil funding that currently precludes ASMSA; however, Director Alderdice stated that it seems unlikely at this time to be at a beneficial level or even be used as a recruitment tool, even if the School were to pursue a full-online experience or hybrid approach.

Concerning the teacher salary increase, Director Alderdice identified a recent clarification that the districts are able to maintain their salary schedules, noting that around 40% of the districts are only utilizing the minimum salary schedule which equals \$48,000 per year for 15 years of teaching with a Master's degree. He noted that it will be important to watch how local districts as well as those in the top 25 paying districts respond to see how it may impact ASMSA.

Director Alderdice also drew attention to Section 38 concerning merit teacher incentives. Teachers will have the potential to earn up to a \$10,000 annual bonus if they meet certain parameters. However, the preliminary numbers available do not indicate the funding for many of these raises, limiting this as a real possibility for most teachers. Director

Alderdice pointed out that in light of this anticipated small pool of funding to grant these merit raises, the implementation of the Faculty Advancement Plan will be the means for the School to keep pace with and be even further ahead of other districts in terms of faculty pay. He noted that the LEARNS Act will be monitored closely as it continues to evolve, especially over the next three months to see how any changes will be integrated into the next academic year.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, a motion was made by Dr. Battle and seconded by Ms. Chambers to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Approved as written ✓

Approved as amended _____

Brian Reed

4/17/2023

Mr. Brian Reed, Secretary

(Date)