



SPARKING INNOVATION, IGNITING GROWTH

ASMSA 2020-2025 Strategic Plan Final Report



ARKANSAS SCHOOL
FOR MATH, SCIENCES, + THE ARTS

As ASMSA reaches the conclusion of its 2025 Strategic Plan, we also close a remarkable chapter in the school's history—one defined by challenge and change, progress and perseverance, growth and guidance. For me, this milestone is personal. Shortly after assuming the role of Director in 2012, I was entrusted with stewarding the implementation of a newly-minted strategic plan that would shape the institution's third decade. As I prepare to step away from ASMSA after more than thirteen years of service at the end of this year, I do so with immense gratitude for all who have worked to sustain and elevate this extraordinary institution.

Strategic planning is supposed to be more than a bureaucratic exercise—it is a declaration of purpose, a statement of values, and a vision for the future. The 2025 Plan, first drafted in early 2020, became all of that and more. Developed during the earliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the plan offered not just direction, but a sense of grounding at a time when daily life and the residential experience we hold so dear was upended. It reminded us of who we are, who we serve, and what we aspire to become through continuous improvement.

What followed were five years marked by innovation and resilience. From expanding access to research and the arts to renovating campus facilities and extending our reach through digital learning, the ASMSA community answered the call again and again. Amid a shifting educational and political landscape—including the arrival of a new Governor, the passage of the LEARNS and ACCESS Acts, and an expanded school choice environment—we held fast to our mission while adapting to new realities. We celebrated our 30th anniversary, welcomed our 3,000th graduate, and affirmed our role as a leader in the statewide conversation about accelerated learning.

These accomplishments were not the work of any one person. They are the result of dedicated faculty and staff, supportive families, engaged alumni, invested partners, and (above all) curious, capable students who remind us every day why this school matters. The 2025 Strategic Plan is, at its heart, a record of what is possible when a community of learning shares a vision and commits fully to its pursuit.



As we look ahead, I remain confident in ASMSA's continued leadership in public education. While the next strategic plan will be shaped by new voices and fresh ideas, it will no doubt carry forward the same spirit that has defined this place from the beginning: one of excellence, innovation, and a deep belief in the power of education to ignite Arkansas' potential.

With gratitude,

Corey Alderdice
Executive Director

ASMSA MISSION



The Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts, a campus of the University of Arkansas System, is a public residential high school serving academically and artistically motivated students of all backgrounds from throughout the state. ASMSA's community of learning exemplifies excellence across disciplines while serving as a statewide center of academic equity and opportunity that ignites the full potential of Arkansas' students and educators.

THE PAST FIVE YEARS

When ASMSA stakeholders first gathered to begin shaping the 2025 Strategic Plan in late 2019, we couldn't have imagined just how profoundly both the world and education would change in the months that soon followed. What began as an exercise in future planning quickly became a compass during a time of disorientation. As the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted every aspect of daily life, our campus community responded not by retreating but by reaffirming our shared purpose while drafting this plan. The values at the heart of ASMSA—excellence, equity, innovation, and resilience—anchored us through uncertainty, serving as both guidepost and rallying cry during some of the most trying days of our institution's history.

Over the past five years, ASMSA has grown stronger through both intentional progress and the lessons learned in adversity. Our faculty and staff reimagined how learning and residential life could thrive, even amid a global crisis. Students demonstrated courage and creativity in adapting to a new normal, while families, alumni, and community partners offered vital support.

From the successful completion of Selig Hall, which expanded our residential capacity, to the sustained expansion of digital and outreach programs statewide, we leaned into the work because our students and Arkansas deserve nothing less.

As pandemic restrictions lifted, a new educational and political landscape began to emerge across Arkansas. The arrival of a new Governor and the passage of sweeping legislation such as the LEARNS Act in 2023 and the ACCESS Act in 2025 reshaped the state's approach to public education, emphasizing accelerated

learning, school choice, and flexible instructional models. These shifts presented both challenges and opportunities for ASMSA. In a moment when school choice has expanded dramatically, ASMSA continues to be a proof point of what's possible when students from every corner of the state are given access to an environment built for their full potential.

We celebrated major milestones that reminded us of

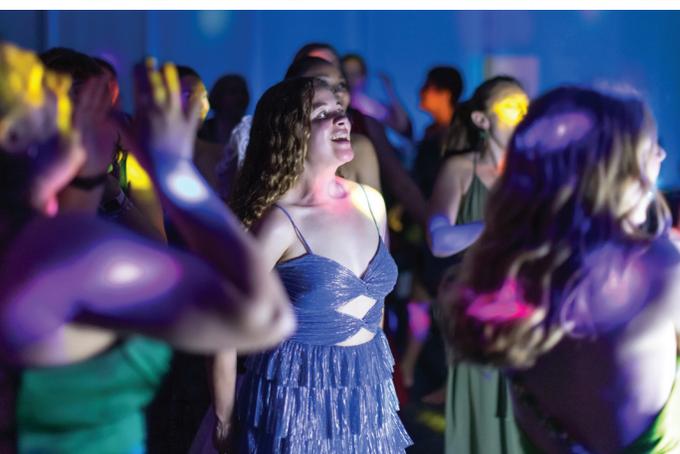
our enduring purpose: thirty years since the Charter Class first arrived on campus and our 3,000th graduate crossing the stage—each occasion a testament to the legislative vision that established this school in 1991. As we honored the past, we also laid the groundwork for the future. New programs like the Visual Arts and Music Programs of Distinction, the Talent Identification Program (ASMSA-TIP), and the HELIX Prep Academy reflect a renewed focus on equity and early access to advanced learning experiences for exceptional students who have traditionally been underserved.

Amid all this change, ASMSA has remained steadfast in its commitment to serving Arkansas as both a leader



and a laboratory for what public education can be. We have embraced the evolving expectations of families and the emerging needs of students while continuing to provide rich, rigorous experiences grounded in relationships, mentorship, and curiosity. The past five years have affirmed that ASMSA is more than a school—it is a dynamic community of learning that adapts, innovates, and leads. As we look to the horizon, we do so with clarity of purpose and optimism for what's to come. Our greatest work still lies ahead, but these past five years have prepared us well.

By 2025, ASMSA will create greater educational access, promote statewide equity, and expand academic vigor that benefits all Arkansans through our residential, out-of-school enrichment, digital learning, and educator development programs. Using novel curricula, meaningful student development experiences, expanded partnership networks, and stronger relationships with our most dedicated advocates, ASMSA will further affirm our state and national leadership in science, mathematics, arts, humanities, and entrepreneurship education.



1 TEACHING + LEARNING

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.

2 STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

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 a whole person, and prepares these future leaders for successful and fulfilling lives through building sustainable skills and mindsets.

3 ENROLLMENT GROWTH

Expand enrollment to serve more students statewide through targeted growth models that reflect our commitment to stewardship of the public investment in ASMSA.

4 PARTNERSHIPS + ADVOCACY

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.

5 FACILITIES EXPANSION

Grow facilities and implement long-range strategies to meet the needs of expanded enrollment, academic experiences, student life, recreation, and community engagement.

KEY OUTCOMES

Over the past five years, our community of learners, educators, families, and partners has come together in remarkable ways, driven by a shared vision of growth, innovation, and excellence at ASMSA. The milestones we've reached are not the result of individual effort but reflect our collective commitment to transforming the lives of students and continually enhancing the school. Each achievement listed below is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and collaboration across all levels of our campus, demonstrating clearly how far we've come—and how enthusiastically we're poised to embrace the opportunities ahead.

TEACHING + LEARNING

EXPANSION OF STUDENT RESEARCH:

Established dedicated positions such as Coordinator for Scholar Development, facilitating enhanced research opportunities and partnerships, including collaborations with institutions like UAMS.

ARTS PROGRAM GROWTH:

Successfully developed and introduced both the Visual Arts and Design as well as Music Programs of Distinction (P.O.D.s), expanding arts education and competition success.

EQUITABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS:

Improved hiring practices and instructional strategies aimed at removing systemic barriers and supporting diverse student populations, notably through the HELIX Prep Academy initiative.

FACULTY ADVANCEMENT:

Implemented a structured Faculty Advancement Plan, significantly increasing professional development opportunities, recognition, and compensation. Faculty salaries now average around \$70,000 per instructor, which is at the top of overall compensation for K-12 educators in the state.

OUTREACH + DIGITAL LEARNING:

Expanded outreach programs through STEM Pathways, achieving record enrollment, and piloted Advanced Placement initiatives like AP Statistics Plus, positioning ASMSA as a leader in statewide educator and student enrichment. Out-of-school programs bring the total number of students, educators, and families supported each year to more than 6,000 Arkansans.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM:

Formalized a robust curriculum focusing on wellness, leadership, social-emotional learning, and healthy relationships, utilizing insights from the Challenge Success Survey for continuous improvement on student wellbeing.

INCLUSION + BELONGING INITIATIVES:

Fostered a campus culture emphasizing belonging and mutual respect, informed by feedback and regular engagement with student groups to address concerns and enhance student support.

PHYSICAL WELLBEING EMPHASIS:

Enhanced facilities for mental health and food-based programming for student wellness that highlight new facets of the residential experience beyond the standard living-learning community.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT:

Permanently integrated mental health resources by providing broad mental health services and proactive student wellness programming accessible year-round.

STUDENT LIFE PROFESSIONALIZATION:

Improved staffing models in Student Life, creating Residential Experience Coordinator positions to elevate professionalism, compensation, stability, and family-student communication.

Individual progress reports from each year are available at asmsa.org/strategicplan.

ENROLLMENT GROWTH

EXPANDED ENROLLMENT CAPACITY:

Reached full enrollment capacity of 260+ students following the completion of Selig Hall renovations, creating new residential spaces and additional opportunities for students.

ARTS-TARGETED RECRUITMENT:

Prioritized recruiting arts-focused students through new curricular pathways, expanded faculty expertise, and specialized admissions strategies.

INNOVATIVE ENROLLMENT MODELS:

Explored and initiated hybrid and online learning opportunities, particularly leveraging the Online Academy and legislated Online Course Choice program to extend ASMSA's reach beyond the traditional residential model.

SOPHOMORE EARLY ENTRANCE:

Successfully exited the pilot phase of the Early Entrance program, demonstrating sustained interest and high retention rates, indicating effectiveness in supporting accelerated learning pathways.

EQUITY IN ADMISSIONS:

Consistently achieved and exceeded target demographics, with low-income student enrollment reaching 40% and significant increases from underrepresented populations that bring their numbers closer to parity with state demographics.

FACILITIES EXPANSION

CAMPUS MASTER PLAN:

Initiated and completed a roadmap for the 2033 Facilities Plan, laying groundwork for significant expansions, including potential arts facilities, recreation areas, and additional student housing.

ARTS FACILITY DEVELOPMENT:

Advanced discussions and preliminary planning for a dedicated Visual and Performing Arts Center, involving partnerships and potential capital campaign efforts with community arts advocates.

HOSPITAL COMPLEX TRANSITION:

Completed vacating the former hospital complex, with construction and transfer processes initiated for administrative and maintenance facilities in close partnership with the City of Hot Springs.

ADVOCACY + PARTNERSHIPS

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT:

Expanded alumni outreach and engagement programs, hired dedicated alumni staff, created the "Alumni Pathways" speaker series, and facilitated consistent Homecoming and Alumni Weekend events.

LEGISLATIVE + COMMUNITY ADVOCACY:

Conducted an insightful Economic and Social Impact Study to reinforce ASMSA's value proposition, facilitating discussions with state legislators and strengthening local partnerships.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT:

Enhanced Parents Association roles, providing regular forums and ongoing surveys for family input, increasing direct communication, and fostering community advocacy for ASMSA.

COMMUNITY INTEGRATION:

Post-pandemic, the availability of the Oaklawn Foundation Community Center within the Creativity and Innovation Complex has positioned ASMSA to be a partner and hub for community programs, concerts, workshops, and other events that raise awareness and engagement with the school.

FUNDRAISING + DEVELOPMENT:

Reinvigorated fundraising activities post-pandemic, including the establishment of new endowed funds and raising over \$125,000 in direct funds annually, targeting long-term sustainability and growth. Giving, grants, and investment income exceeded \$1 million over the past five years.

ENHANCED RESIDENTIAL SPACES:

Completed substantial renovations of Selig Hall, increasing residential capacity, student wellness facilities, and community spaces such as a new Student Union, Mental Health Hub, and Auditorium.

FUTURE FACILITIES FUNDING ADVOCACY:

Actively engaged with state legislative bodies and Arkansas Department of Education leadership to advocate for both one-time and ongoing capital funding in alignment with other public residential institutions and to secure sustainable funding streams for facilities needs.

INNOVATION + EXCELLENCE



The community of learning at the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts (ASMSA) embarked on an ambitious journey in 2020 at the outset of the pandemic era to frame and execute the “Sparking Innovation, Igniting Growth” 2025 Strategic Plan. Now, as the institution reaches this significant milestone, a thorough reflection upon the extensive accomplishments across the five core domains—Teaching and Learning, Student Development, Enrollment Growth, Advocacy and Partnerships, and Facilities Expansion—reveals an impactful narrative of growth, innovation, and sustained commitment to excellence.

Within Teaching and Learning, ASMSA demonstrated remarkable agility and innovation during the challenges presented by COVID-19 and beyond. The creation of dedicated roles, including the Coordinator for Scholar Development and the Associate Deans, expanded student opportunities for advanced research and competitive achievements. Strategic collaborations with leading institutions such as the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) positioned ASMSA students prominently in national science competitions, while structured partnerships offered meaningful, career-aligned internships and projects. The Visual Arts and Design as well as the forthcoming Music Program of Distinction (P.O.D.) successfully integrated the arts more profoundly into ASMSA’s culture, enhancing the institution’s comprehensive educational profile and affirming its commitment to creative expression alongside STEM excellence.

This strategic plan also prioritized fostering inclusive learning environments. ASMSA implemented targeted measures such as the HELIX Prep Academy, which provided a supportive, rigorous academic framework tailored for students from diverse, often underserved backgrounds. Additionally, teacher support was significantly bolstered through the Faculty Advancement Plan, raising professional standards and compensation, thus ensuring ASMSA remained attractive to top-tier educators dedicated to fostering a dynamic learning community. The Faculty Advancement Plan places ASMSA faculty, on average, at the top of compensation in the state relative to years of teaching and educational credentials.

Equally impressive were the strides taken in Student Development. ASMSA expanded and refined its Student Development Curriculum, emphasizing leadership, wellness, social-emotional learning, and digital citizenship. Insights derived from the Stanford-based Challenge Success Survey empowered the institution to proactively address students’ holistic needs. Robust mental health resources, highlighted by the establishment of a permanent Licensed Social Worker position and dedicated Mental Health Hub, emphasized the importance of student wellness, significantly decreasing stigma and increasing

access and utilization of mental health services.

Residential life improvements further solidified ASMSA's commitment to nurturing well-rounded students. Residential Experience Coordinators were elevated to twelve-month professional roles, bridging student life and family engagement more effectively. Facility upgrades, a community kitchen, Student Union, shared student spaces for study and meetings, as well as nutritious food programs provided students with a healthy living-learning environment designed to foster academic and personal growth.

ASMSA's strategic Enrollment Growth initiatives marked an era of deliberate expansion and inclusivity. With the completion of the renovated Selig Hall, residential capacity increased to 260 students, directly responding to heightened statewide demand. Targeted recruitment strategies, especially in the visual and performing arts, began to reshape ASMSA's public perception from primarily a STEM-centric institution to a balanced educational entity deeply committed to the arts. Additionally, the development and piloting of hybrid and online learning programs, including the launch of the Online Academy, provided innovative educational models to serve diverse student needs effectively. ASMSA also successfully transitioned the Sophomore Early Entrance program from a pilot to an established part of its academic structure, underscoring the institution's adaptability and responsiveness to the evolving educational landscape.

The emphasis on equity in enrollment ensured that students from economically diverse backgrounds had equitable access to ASMSA's rigorous academic offerings. Enrollment strategies achieved and exceeded critical benchmarks, notably maintaining a significant proportion of students from low-income families and enhancing racial and geographic diversity. This proactive approach towards inclusivity strengthened ASMSA's foundational principle of providing high-quality education irrespective of socioeconomic background or geography. At the same time, ASMSA remained committed to high standards of excellence within the admissions process and the core academic experience that ensured strong expectations for all students while also achieving record-low attrition.

In the Advocacy and Partnerships domain, ASMSA strategically amplified its influence and community impact. Renewed alumni engagement, enhanced by dedicated roles and meaningful engagement platforms, significantly contributed to both student mentorship opportunities and the broader institutional advancement goals. Crucially, an updated Economic and Social Impact Study provided compelling evidence of ASMSA's substantial economic contribution, doubling the return on public investment and reinforcing its integral role in local and statewide community and economic development.

Engaging actively with the Parents Advisory Council





deepened family involvement, fostering a vibrant, collaborative atmosphere that supported robust student outcomes. Local partnerships flourished through initiatives such as the Science and Arts Café, positioning ASMSA as a central hub for cultural and educational enrichment in Hot Springs and beyond. Annual fundraising was consistent over the five-year period. Continued interest and investment in endowed funds helped to promote long-term support and sustainability for a variety of initiatives.

Facilities Expansion emerged as a critical facilitator for ASMSA's comprehensive growth, with substantial achievements made under this strategic pillar. Building on the completion of the Creativity and Innovation Complex in 2019, forward progress continued with the completion of the transformative Selig Hall (2022) renovation project notably expanding residential capacity and introducing dedicated spaces for mental health, shared activities, and community engagement. Renovations and replacements to mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems in the Academic Building (2021-2024) through a variety of funding streams as well as completion of the new Campus Administration Building (2025) and approval of the Maintenance Building (completion in 2026) completed the first phase of the \$37.5 million physical transformation of campus. These improvements enhanced the on-

campus experience.

Strategically, ASMSA progressed significantly towards a comprehensive revision of its 2008 Campus Master Plan through development of the 2033 Facilities Plan. Efforts centered on transitioning from the former hospital complex to purpose-built academic, administrative, and residential facilities underscored a forward-looking commitment to providing students and staff with state-of-the-art educational environments. Early-stage planning for new visual and performing arts facilities underscored the institution's commitment to its legislated arts mission, with the exploration of substantial community and philanthropic partnerships laying the groundwork for this visionary project.

Despite considerable successes, the strategic planning process identified continuing areas of focus, particularly advocating for significant and specific direct investment by the state in ASMSA facilities beyond the funding the school has intentionally set aside as part of the annual budget the past decade. ASMSA leadership actively engaged state legislators to secure sustainable funding structures that mirror investments in comparable public institutions. While direct legislative success remains forthcoming, groundwork and advocacy efforts have effectively set the stage for future legislative considerations, aligning closely with ASMSA's long-term vision.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR ASMSA?

As ASMSA reflects on the substantial accomplishments achieved through the 2025 Strategic Plan, the horizon ahead promises continued growth, innovation, and sustained excellence in specialized programming that benefits Arkansas students, educators, and families. Central to the institution's forward-looking vision will be expanding and refining academic and co-curricular experiences, enhancing campus infrastructure, deepening community partnerships, and maintaining inclusive pathways for students from all backgrounds.

The immediate future holds strategic enhancements in Teaching and Learning, with increased emphasis on advanced research partnerships. The maturation of the Program of Distinction model in the visual and performing arts is expected to continue shaping ASMSA's identity, ensuring students are well-prepared for competitive collegiate programs. Anticipated initiatives like the Music (P.O.D.) will further diversify student opportunities, allowing ASMSA to reach beyond its historical STEM roots.

Within Student Development, ASMSA remains committed to holistic growth, focusing extensively on student wellness, mental health, and social-emotional learning. Plans include deeper integration of the Student Development Curriculum, aligning residential and academic experiences more seamlessly. Other initiatives will demonstrate continued commitment to innovative wellness programming, reflecting ASMSA's dedication to nurturing balanced, well-rounded students.

A critical component of ASMSA's vision involves leveraging innovative enrollment strategies, particularly through digital education and hybrid models. The launch of the Online Course Choice Program under the LEARNS Act offers an exciting avenue for expansion, allowing ASMSA to further extend its reach statewide. Further development of online Advanced Placement and other course offerings positions ASMSA to support a broader, geographically diverse student body. Initiatives such as the Talent Identification Program (ASMSA-TIP) continue to reach an audience of elementary and middle grades students as well as the educators who support their learning.

In the sphere of Advocacy and Partnerships,

ASMSA will continue to deepen relationships with alumni, parents, local businesses, and government stakeholders. The recent Economic and Social Impact Study showcases ASMSA's significant statewide influence, and future efforts will continue to articulate the school's unique value proposition to secure sustained public investment. Strengthening these partnerships will not only enhance ASMSA's ability to deliver exceptional educational experiences but also reinforce its role as a catalyst for community and economic development.

ASMSA's strategic growth is underscored by ongoing efforts in Facilities Expansion. With key milestones already achieved—such as the first phase of the \$37.5 million transformation of campus—the school looks forward to the next major projects, including the construction of a new arts facility and enhanced recreational amenities. These developments, critical for accommodating future enrollment growth and enriching campus life, are supported by active advocacy for legislative funding and support from the Arkansas Department of Education.

The 2025 Strategic Plan provided a comprehensive roadmap that significantly enhanced ASMSA's educational offerings, institutional equity, community advocacy, and physical infrastructure. The concerted efforts across each strategic domain reflect a dedicated community deeply invested in the institution's continuous growth and excellence. The outcomes achieved through this strategic initiative serve not only as a testament to ASMSA's unwavering commitment to education but also as a powerful catalyst for future innovation, inclusivity, and sustainable growth. The accomplishments and insights gained throughout this journey solidly position ASMSA to continue its legacy of excellence, effectively addressing future educational challenges and opportunities.

Ultimately, the next chapter for ASMSA will build upon a foundation of transformative educational experiences, strategic institutional growth, and inclusive support systems. By embracing innovation, fostering resilience among students, and advancing its mission through strategic partnerships and facility expansions, ASMSA is poised to meet future challenges and opportunities with creativity, confidence, and sustained excellence.





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