

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

July 29, 2025

4:00 p.m.

Based on discussion and replies regarding availability of appointed members, the Board of Visitors met via Zoom on Tuesday, July 29, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. for a discussion regarding the proposed Fitness Center project.

Board members participating were: Dr. Marlene Battle ('97), Chair; Ms. Mary Alice Chambers, Vice Chair; Mrs. Mary Zunick, Secretary; and Mr. Brian Reed. Ex-Officio members in attendance were: Dr. Alicia Cotabish, Dr. Ashley Hicks, and Miss Grace Conn ('26).

Also in attendance were the following: Corey Alderdice, Executive Director; Stuart Flynn, Dean of Academic Affairs; Dr. Rheo Morris, Dean of Students; Jason Hudnell, Director of Admissions and Talent Development; Steven Malec, Director of Finance; Brandi Brazil, Director of Human Resources and Campus Culture; Phil Grace, Information Technology and Operations Manager; Donnie Sewell, Public Information Specialist; Cara Jay, Annual Giving and Alumni Coordinator; and Mandy Patterson, Executive Assistant and Event Coordinator.

During the Board of Visitors meeting in May, Dean Morris gave a special presentation on the proposed fitness center (internally named Alumni Hall). Director Alderdice referred to an attached footprint of the space, which is planned to be approximately 10,000 square feet. The space would include a traditional cardio and weight room, indoor walking track, dance and yoga studio, dedicated eSports lab, and a large club room. The discussion also included the possibility of a dedicated campus green space (New Charter Field) specifically designed to facilitate informal sports, recreational activities, and outdoor community building events.

In July, Mr. Malec provided Director Alderdice with an update on the school's state funding reserves, which were described as optimistic. Director Alderdice referred to ASMSA's planned expenditures and anticipated gains through FY30. The school began FY25 with approximately \$6.5 million cash reserves on hand and expects to add about \$1.9 million per year on average. By the start of FY28, the school is projected to have over \$8 million in funding available. The estimated cost for the Alumni Hall and New Charter Field project is around \$4.25 million.

Moving forward with the project would not be at the expense of or delay other campus needs. Director Alderdice stated the need to continue overall facilities and capital projects conversation with the Governor's office, Legislature, and Department of Education and the potential for a one-time investment. He hopes this conversation will be part of a broader discussion on the redevelopment of the hospital complex, possibly leading to a match challenge. He proposed that if the school were to allocate \$7.5 million, the state could match it. Director Alderdice clarified that the school would not be asking the state to cover the full cost but to play a part in redeveloping the front of the campus and the downtown area.

Acknowledging the current leadership transition, Director Alderdice brought the project forward for consideration. He explained that this is a long-standing need and that the project had positive feedback from the Board in May, strong support from the campus workgroup, and consensus from the leadership team. He seeks explicit endorsement from the Board of Visitors to present the project to President Silveria so that it can potentially be considered by the Board of Trustees in the fall, or by January at the latest. Even with approval in November, the earliest projected opening would be August 2028. Director Alderdice stressed the need to avoid further delays for this project, which replaces the former fitness center in the hospital complex.

A question was raised about the decision to expand the space to 10,000 square feet. Director Alderdice and Dean Morris explained that the original plan was for 4,000 square feet but was increased based on data showing that around 20% of the student body participates in wellness activities. The scope was further expanded to include staff and provide more useable space, resulting in a design of 6,600 square feet on the first floor and 3,500 on the second. Director Alderdice noted that the North Carolina School of Science and Math is building a 28,000-square-foot wellness facility as a point of comparison. He also noted that survey data from the 2033 Facilities Plan indicated that co-ed spaces were the most requested feature by students. Ms. Jay confirmed that alumni at previous mixers also mentioned the need for such gathering spaces.

Mrs. Zunick emphasized the importance of having an easily accessible fitness facility to help students establish healthy, active lifestyles while in high school, which can carry over into college.

Mr. Reed inquired about potential additional staffing needs. Director Alderdice does not anticipate needing extra staff, aside from the student volunteers in the regular work service program for the check-in desk. Student Life have previously been assigned to monitor the fitness center.

Dr. Battle asked why the project was moving forward during a leadership transition, aside from the availability of funds. Director Alderdice reiterated that this is a long-standing need and a high-priority item identified in the 2033 Facilities Plan. He argued that moving forward now, with available funding and strong consensus, is important to ensure project approval does not get pushed back to November 2026 or later, which would further delay addressing this need.

Mr. Reed asked about the intended development of the hospital footprint. Director Alderdice mentioned potential concepts, including a 40,000-square-foot Performing Arts Center and a 30,000-square-foot Visual Arts Building, based on privately developed concepts from community members in 2019. Preliminary discussions with the architect also included the possibility of a 40-bed residence hall. Director Alderdice emphasized the need for flexibility in how that footprint proceeds, noting that a Performing Arts Center might be built elsewhere, potentially on the Majestic footprint. If that were to come to fruition in the next few years, that would mitigate the need for a similar space on campus. ASMSA will need to be adaptable on that front. In the broader conversation about school choice and economies of scale for the campus, should the State want to offer additional beds the school could put that development in the front end of the campus.

Director Alderdice indicated that more detailed discussion of campus growth and future planning is scheduled for the September meeting.

Dean Flynn emphasized the enthusiasm and support given by the senior leadership team for Alumni Hall and New Charter Field and believes it's a necessary complement to the academic programs and overall student health. He added that the Admissions Department gets asked about the existence of a fitness space continuously during the admission process, showing its importance to potential families of ASMSA.

Mr. Reed asked Director Alderdice to share the prospectus onscreen again. He indicated that there is no way to guarantee the institution will have reserve funds so the statement regarding the project being fully funded through existing reserve funds is misleading.

Director Alderdice explained that this is an intended road map based on historic trends and added if the group is not comfortable with including that statement in the proposed resolution regarding reserve funds, it can be taken out.

Dr. Battle asked if there was a guarantee the State would match the funds on future projects.

Director Alderdice stated that there are no guarantees, but he hopes the fact that the school has prioritized the continued investment of funds into the development of campus with limited support shows good stewardship of the State's investment and makes a compelling case for why further funding is merited.

Dr. Battle added that she is always in favor of progression of the campus but not 100% persuaded on the wellness space at this time. Her concern is timing of leadership transition and funding of the project.

Mr. Reed added that he sees the need for the fitness space but is not sure he can support the decision at this time.

Mrs. Zunick expressed her concern with pushing the project further into the future when ASMSA already has the proposed plans and finances to accomplish it sooner.

Dr. Cotabish added that since her involvement with the school back in 2002, the lack of a fitness space has always been a concern and delaying the project could push it another 10 years.

Dr. Morris reiterated that students and parents have been talking about the fitness space since she was hired in 2017. She stated confusion over doubts about Alumni Hall after having more positive discussions in May's Board of Visitors Meeting.

Director Alderdice added that with funding on hand, he thinks it would be a mistake not to move on this when the opportunity is presented.

Mrs. Zunick made a motion to move forward with Alumni Hall and New Charter Field projects.

There was no second on the motion. In absence of a second to the motion, the motion died.

Director Alderdice began the next agenda item with the news of him stepping down as Executive Director of ASMSA at the end of the calendar year. He stated that President Silveria and Dr. Michael Moore will be on campus next week to answer questions regarding the transition. Director Alderdice invited the Board to attend.

Director Alderdice stated the next agenda item is to review the dates for the 2026 Board of Visitors Meetings. If anyone has potential conflicts they should reach out to Ms. Patterson.

Director Alderdice also stated that ASMSA, in partnership with Garvan Woodland Gardens, will be hosting the final Board of Trustees meeting for the year on May 20-21, 2026. There will be a dinner at Garvin Gardens the evening of the 20th and Director Alderdice emphasized the importance of the Board of Visitors members attending that meeting.

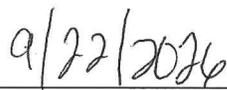
Director Alderdice also stated that Commencement is set for May 16, 2026, at Oaklawn Event Center.

The meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

Approved as written _____ Approved as amended _____



Mrs. Mary Zunic, Secretary



(Date)