# Arizona School for the Arts

## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

**Monday, August 24, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.**

***On Campus*: Building A, Room 129**

## Attendance (Voting Members in **Bold**)

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| **Allison Otu, President** | **P** | **Michelle Davidson, Vice President** | **P** | **Scott S. Stone, Treasurer** | **A** |
| **Melvin (Mel) Brown** | **P** | **Michelle Buckley** | **P** | **Carrie Larson** | **P** |
| **Michael Medici, AIA** | **A** | **Marcelino Quiñonez** | **A** | **Annette Zinky** | **A** |
| David Alderslade | P | Jennifer Delgado | P | Elizabeth (Liz) Goodman | P |
| Jaime Dempsey | P | Joshua Pierce, Honorary Arts Faculty | P | Todd Webster, Honorary Academic Faculty | P |
| Lola Morales, Honorary Student | P | Promise Ndayiragije, Honorary Student | P | Elma Džanić Bass, Head of School | P |
| Leslie Religioso, Director of Advancement & CR | P | Carolyn Smith, Executive Office Manager | P | David Lujan, Executive Consultant | P |
| Forrest Valora II, Business Manager | P | | | | |

## Agenda Items

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| **Call to the Public** | |
| | Allison Otu |
| **Mission Moment** | |
| Back to School | Elma Džanić Bass |
| **Board Recognition** | |
| | Allison Otu |
| **Board Informational Presentations** | |
| Good Governance, Responsibilities & Conflict of Interest | Allison Otu |
| Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) | Elma Džanić Bass |
| Board Commitments and Fundraising | Allison Otu & Leslie Religioso |
| Open Meeting Law | Elma Džanić Bass |

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| Who We Are | Elma Džanić Bass |
| ASA's Funding & Financial Structure | Forrest Valora |
| Board Committees & Assignments | Allison Otu & Elma Džanić Bass |
| **Consent Agenda** | |
| Head of School Report | Elma Džanić Bass |
| Director of Advancement & Community Relations Report | Leslie Religioso |
| **Action Items** | |
| Approval of the June 22, 2026 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes | |
| Approval of the July 8, 2026 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes | |
| Approval of the Addition of Elma Džanić Bass as ASBCS Charter Representative | |
| The Board of Directors may vote to hold an executive session for the purpose of obtaining legal advice from the Board's attorney on any matter listed on the agenda pursuant to: ARS §38-431.03 (A)(3) Legal Advice | |

## Minutes

The Board President Allison Otu called the meeting to order at 5:35pm.

**Call to the Public**
The members of the public present at the meeting did not wish to offer comment; Allison moved to the next agenda item.

**Mission Moment**
Elma Džanić Bass shared some photos from the first day of school and informed the Board that ASA's theme for this school year -- coined by Director of Lower School and Academic Systems Andrew Doumkes -- is "Creating the Conditions for Excellence". The goal of everyone on faculty and staff is to provide all members of our community with the tools and the environment to thrive.

**Board Recognition**
Allison welcomed the new Student Honorary Board Members, Lola Morales and Promise Ndayiragije. Both students are Seniors this year, so they will each have a 1-year term. Allison also announced the member resignations of Dr. Lorisa Pombo, Leola Abraham, and Nonnie Shivers during the month of August. All three cited increased responsibilities at their jobs and a resulting inability to devote the proper time and attention to their board responsibilities within these time constraints. Allison thanked each of them for their many contributions to the Board of Directors and ASA over their terms of service.

**Informational Presentations**

- Allison told the Board that the One Million Reasons, One Hundred Students, Once Connected Community theme would carry on to this year, with an increased goal of $1.5 million. The theme ties into their responsibilities of good governance requiring full participation, network activation, fundraising and student recruitment, mission stewardship, integrity, and transparency. She also clarified with the Board that they are not responsible for the day-to-day operations or management of the school and if such questions or issues are posed to them by members of the community, they are to be referred to Administration.

- Elma shared the definition of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and the Board's responsibility to student confidentiality within their duties as members.
- Allison and Leslie Religioso summarized the Board's commitments to fundraising, reminding them that their primary role is to act as financial stewards, advocates, and ambassadors for ASA. To this end, Leslie told the board that a primary focus this year will be corporate partnerships and event sponsorships. As individuals and families have less expendable income, corporations and foundations do still have charitable spending budgets and providing them with targeted and tangible results of their donations will inspire giving. The key opportunities this year will be Signature Series performances and Showcase and the goal is secure commitments early, before budgets close elsewhere. Sponsorship packets will be available in September.
- Elma went over the points of Open Meeting Law that most affect their interactions as a Board and reminded them that full Open Meeting Law presentations and resources are available at all times on the Board Portal.
- Elma reviewed the four key priorities of the finalized 2026-2029 Strategic Plan: ASA School Redesign, Funding & Facilities, Student Experience, and Talent & Capacity. She then posed the Year 1 goal of each priority, explaining that each Director on the Senior Leadership Team has actionable responsibility for the priorities in their purviews and noting that work began as soon as the SLT came back from their summer break in mid-July.
- Elma gave an overview of the school demographics in the categories of students, Board, faculty, staff, and the Senior Leadership Team. She also showed and abridged Board Matrix noting that most of the remaining board members are in their first term.
- An overview of how the school is funded was provided to the Board including a breakdown of how the various revenue streams factor into the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget. Forrest Valora also provided revenue and spending data for 2025-2026 and end of year budget results. Elma informed the Board that she and Forrest along with members of the Finance Committee will be working together to create a financial plan to ensure the school's fiscal health for the next three years.
- Allison and Elma quickly highlighted the various committees and councils on which board members can participate, noting where there are openings. Elma said that they can discuss their interests with her when they have their 1:1 meetings over the coming weeks.

**Consent Agenda**

Elma asked the Board to read the Head of School and Director of Advancement & Community Relations reports that were posted on the Board Portal as they both contain more detailed information on their activities over the past month. They are both available to entertain any questions or comments via email.

**Action Items**

*Approval of the June 22, 2026 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes*

Michelle Davidson moved to approve the June 22, 2026 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Carrie Larson and passed unanimously without further discussion. [Otu, Davidson, Brown, Buckley, Larson, and Zinky voting in favor.]

*Approval of the July 8, 2026 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes*

Mel Brown moved to approve the July 8, 2026 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Michelle Davidson and passed unanimously without further discussion. [Otu, Davidson, Brown, Buckley, Larson, and Zinky voting in favor.]

*Approval of the Addition of Elma Džanić Bass as ASBCS Charter Representative*

Carrie Larson moved to approve the addition of Elma Džanić Bass as ASBCS Charter Representative. The motion was seconded by Mel Brown and passed unanimously without further discussion. [Otu, Davidson, Brown, Buckley, Larson, and Zinky voting in favor.]

**Guest Speaker**

Allison introduced Jessica Catlin from Pivot Solutions, a seasoned fundraising leader with bonus experience in marketing, communications, and advocacy. Jessisca provided the Board with an interactive fundraising training session with her unique perspectives on the steps of the fundraising cycle, donor identification and acquisition, the donor pyramid, and some "golden rules" of solicitation including their role in the process as volunteers.

Having completed the agenda in its entirety, the meeting adjourned at 7:37pm.

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Minutes reviewed and accepted on: September 28, 2026

Signed by: Michelle Davidson, Board Member