



Arizona School for the Arts
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 28, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.
Google Meet: meet.google.com/kme-jjgq-kqo

Attendance (Voting Members in **Bold**)

Allison Otu, President	P	Michelle Davidson, Vice President	P	Scott S. Stone, Treasurer	P
Melvin (Mel) Brown	P	Michelle Buckley	A	Jennifer Delgado	P
Jaime Dempsey	A	Carrie Larson	P	Michael Medici, AIA	A
Marcelino Quiñonez	A	Annette Zinky	P	David Alderslade	A
Elizabeth (Liz) Goodman	A	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	Forrest Valora II, Business Manager	P

Agenda Items

 Call to the Public	
	Allison Otu
 Mission Moment	
Lower School Club Fair	Lola Morales & Promise Ndayiragije
 Board Member Feature	
	Allison Otu
 Presentation	
Academic Data School Year 2025-2026	Andrew Doumakes, Director of Lower School & Academic Programs
 Discussion Items	
Finance & Facilities Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">• August 2026 Reports• Review of Fiscal Year 2025-2025 Annual Financial Report• Discussion Topic:	Scott Stone, Forrest Valora & Elma Džanić Bass

Resource Development Council • Signature Series Sponsorship	Jaime Dempsey, Allison Otu & Leslie Religioso
 Consent Agenda	
President Updates	Allison Otu
Head of School Report	Elma Džanić Bass
Director of Advancement & Community Relations Report	Leslie Religioso
 Action Items	
Approval of the August 24, 2026 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes	
Approval of Annette Zinky as Board Secretary	
Approval of the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Annual Financial Report via Roll Call Vote	
Approval of the Removal of David Lujan as ASBCS Charter Representative	
 The Board of Directors will vote to hold an executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters pursuant to: ARS §38-431.03 (A)(1) Personnel	
 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

Board President Allison Otu called the meeting to order at 5:34pm.

Call to the Public

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

Mission Moment

Student Honorary Board Members Lola Morales and Promise Ndayiragije introduced the Board to student clubs that are conceived and driven by students themselves, based on a particular passion or interest of theirs. All students in grades 5-12 have the opportunity to form a student club as long as they have an interest, a day of the week during lunchtime, and a faculty advisor. Lola and Promise highlighted Artists for Change run by 7th grader Adrienne Hughes, "...which has projects that combines students from different grades, arts, and backgrounds, and guides them into working together." and Health Club founded by 9th grader Solana Taribach whose goal is to "...introduce medical science as something that teens can contribute to and consider pursuing."

Board Member Feature

Allison informed the Board that the agenda slot that was formerly dedicated to Board Recognition will now be formatted to feature a board member each month in an effort to enhance the Board's knowledge of each other. Board Vice President Michelle Davidson was the featured member for September.

Presentation

The Director of Lower School & Academic Programs, Andrew Doumakes, gave the Board a consolidated overview of a report he prepared that shows the Spring 2026 testing results as they compare with the prior year along with other academic data.

- Based on the test scores, ASA is on track for an “A” grade again this year. The letter grade system is going to be revised for 2026-2027; the bonus points will be removed.
- Current test scores in Math and ELA by grade against the prior year all improved with the exception of 7th grade which decreased in both areas. ASA’s overall scores against the state remain higher by a good margin, particularly in ELA. The pattern remains uneven and ASA will need to pay extra attention to Math.
- For the 2026-2027 school year, ASA has switched testing programs from NWEA to IXL. The IXL program allows teachers and students to pinpoint areas in need of improvement and allows for practice in those areas.
- Long term achievement at ASA remains strong. In the Class of 2026, 96% of students were accepted at their top 3 choice of colleges and the graduates received \$6.2M in merit scholarship money. An area of improvement is the AP scores; 84% of AP students earned at least a 3 or higher on an exam. Administration is going to look into testing fatigue and which exams need the most attention to improve.

Andrew was thanked for the presentation and invited to return when he has another layer of data to present.

Discussion Items

Finance & Facilities Committee

Scott Stone reviewed the financial dashboard for the month of August; cash reserves remain above our bond covenants, but enrollment-driven revenue and the debt service coverage require attention. Scott noted that Head of School Elma Dzanic Bass is working on new ways to bring in revenue. Scott and Allison then led a discussion on what enrollment and fundraising levelers should the school prioritize to improve the financial outlook for the current year. Elma noted that the work ASA is doing with Transcend put a lens on what we are offering students to keep them here and what we need to change to attract and sustain enrollment. The enrollment application period will begin soon; we have seen good numbers for new students over the past couple of years, but the concentrated work needs to be retaining the students we have. The fiscal year 2025-2026 Annual Financial Report was posted on the Board Portal for review and would be up for approval during the Action Items.

Resource Development Council

- Leslie Religioso gave an overview of the Development Dashboard, noting that since July, we have raised \$48k, trending ahead of this time last year, and while the Tax Credit revenue is trending behind last year, the net result still puts us a bit ahead.
- Leslie then debuted the 2026-2027 Sponsorship Kit that includes opportunities for both Signature Series events and Showcase, with several levels for sponsors on different budgets. Allison said that the levels provide great opportunities for sponsor exposure and she asked board members to share the kit with their social circle to expand outreach.
- In conjunction with sponsorship efforts, Allison asked all board members to “adopt” a Signature Series performance and act as its ambassador, inviting those they want to introduce to ASA to their selected event. Several board members stepped forward and will work on invitations. Leslie will provide some breakdowns of the costs for putting on the various productions.

Consent Agenda

President Update

Allison told the board that there will be an executive session after the Action Items.

Head of School Report

Elma said that it has been a very busy first quarter which will be ending on Friday. A large part of that time has been spent working on the school's financial stability and sustainability with the Finance & Facilities Committee, helping to shape ASA for the future. Elma also made special note of the visit from Transcend Education and the work that is being started to envision ASA 3.0 including high-level conversations on how we can expand programming. Enrollment is stable and Administration is keeping an eye on it; recruitment season for school year 2027-2028 begins on October 5th with the lottery being moved from the January to the February board meeting and then there may be up to two more subsequent draws depending on the waitlist.

Director of Advancement & Community Relations Report

Leslie is working on grant applications to support ASA's programs and general operations. She is currently focusing on grants from Josh Groban's Find Your Light Foundation, the Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation, and the Phoenix Suns/Phoenix Mercury Foundation as their missions match particular goals for the school at this time. In the coming months Development's focus will be on the Fall Giving Appeal to help defray arts costs and the Tax Credit campaign

Action Items

Approval of the August 24, 2026 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Carrie Larson moved to approve the August 24, 2026 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Scott Stone and passed unanimously without further discussion. [Otu, Davidson, Stone, Brown, Delgado, Larson, and Zinky voting in favor.]

Approval of Annette Zinky as Board Secretary

Michelle Davidson moved to approve Annette Zinky as Board Secretary. The motion was seconded by Mel Brown and passed unanimously without further discussion. [Otu, Davidson, Stone, Brown, Delgado, and Larson, voting in favor; Zinky abstained.]

Approval of the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Annual Financial Report via Roll Call Vote

Michelle Davidson moved to the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Annual Financial Report. The motion was seconded by Carrie Larson and passed unanimously via roll call vote without further discussion. [Otu, Davidson, Stone, Brown, Delgado, Larson, and Zinky voting in favor.]

Approval of the Removal of David Lujan as ASBCS Charter Representative

Scott Stone moved to approve the removal of David Lujan as ASBCS Charter Representative. The motion was seconded by Annette Zinky and passed unanimously without further discussion. [Otu, Davidson, Stone, Brown, Delgado, Larson, and Zinky voting in favor.]

Executive Session

At 7:05 pm Mel Brown moved that the Board of Directors commence an executive session in order to discuss the purchase, sale, or lease of real property pursuant to: ARS §38-431.03 (A)(2) Personnel. The motion was seconded by Carrie Larson and passed unanimously without further discussion. [Otu, Davidson, Stone, Brown, Delgado, Larson, and Zinky voting in favor.]

The executive session ended at 7:18 pm.

Adjournment

Having completed the agenda in its entirety, the meeting adjourned at 7:18 pm.

Minutes reviewed and accepted on: October 26, 2026

Signed by: Annette Zinky, Board Member
[Annette Zinky \(Oct 29, 2026 12:17:20 PDT\)](#)