

**SARASOTA MILITARY ACADEMY**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS WORKSHOP**  
25 AUGUST 2025

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**Board of Director Members' Attendance**

**Present:**

Dr. Thomas J. McElheny, Former Capt, USMC, Chair  
Erica Gregory, Lt Col, USAF (Ret), Vice Chair  
Ben Knisely, COL, USA (Ret), Secretary  
Pete Skokos, Treasurer  
Scott Lempe, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)  
Carlos Moreira, 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt, USMCR (virtual)  
Jerry Neff, BG, USA (Ret)  
Charles Shugg, Brig Gen, USAF (Ret)  
Ron Skipper, Former Capt, USAF  
Richard Swoope, COL, USA (Ret)  
Michael Tollerton, Former CPT, USA

**Absent:** Heather Koester, Former SGT, USAR

**SMA Administrative Staff in Attendance:**

SMA-COL Christina Bowman, CEO/Head of High School  
Dr. Cheryl Korwin, Head of Middle School  
SMA-LTC Steve Kok, Director of Finance  
SMA-MAJ Savannah Kalka, Assistant Director of Finance

**Guests in Attendance:** W. Scott Wallace, GEN, USA (Ret); Ms. Nikki Orth

Location: SMA High School

The chair called the meeting to order at 2:30 pm.

Chair Thomas McElheny started the Pledge of Allegiance. He introduced GEN W. Scott Wallace as a prospective board member.

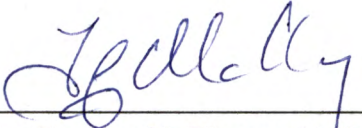
Lt Col Scott Lempe provided a presentation to the board on workshop agenda. He discussed the challenging trends over the last decade and the lack of a robust presence in the community. Lt Col Lempe discussed the history of the school grade, with SMA-COL Bowman providing specific factors of the past decade of the contributing yearly deficit with the IB program and the building of the middle school.

Lt Col Lempe discussed the decline in enrollment from 2017 and the budget based on FTE funds and the expensive four by four-block schedule. Chair McElheny outlined five areas of focus: (1) conducting a CEO search or considering a reorganization while maintaining a CEO and seeking new head of school; (2) initiating a search for Commandant to strengthen campus culture; (3) implementing a character development program for grades 6-12 to complement JROTC and military studies; (4) developing and sharing the SMA story with the community; and (5) ensuring 100% board participation.

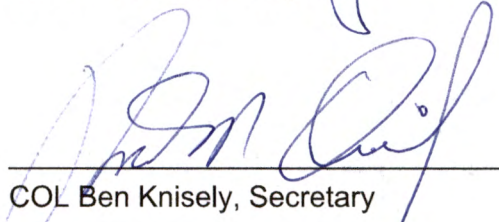
GEN Wallace discussed the organizational structure at West Point to be the Super runs the academy, the Commandant focuses on culture and military, and the Dean oversees the academics. He inquired as to how the Medal of Honor program could integrate into the current curriculum and if there's a current student chain of command, to which SMA-COL Bowman replied that there is cadet chain of command on both campuses.

COL Richard Swoope recommended placing the Gold Star School of Distinction as it marks the high school as one in top 10% JROTC programs. Chair McElheny stated for SMA-COL Bowman to schedule campus tours for GEN Wallace with cadet briefing.

The chair adjourned the meeting at 10:13 am.

  
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Dr. Thomas McElheny, Chair

9/23/25  
Date

  
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COL Ben Knisely, Secretary

9/23/25  
Date