APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PLAN

RECRUITMENT PLAN 2025-2026

2024-2025 Implementation Summary:

A list of the Successes and Challenges of implementing the school's recruitment strategies from the 2024-2025 Recruitment Plan

Successes:

- The school successfully expanded outreach by **strengthening relationships with local community organizations and feeder schools**, resulting in increased interest from underrepresented communities. We sent 6,671 postcards to children between the ages of 8-12.
- **Open Houses and school tours were well attended**, with positive feedback from families about the welcoming environment and academic focus. AMSA's SEPAC was present at our information nights and has been communicating regularly through our publicly posted newsletters.
- Targeted efforts to promote AMSA's commitment to diversity and academic excellence, through multilingual materials, online engagement, and student testimonials, led to a **more diverse applicant pool** than in previous years.
- Internal collaboration between leadership, enrollment staff, and faculty created a more **streamlined and consistent messaging strategy** about AMSA's mission and offerings.

Challenges:

- Despite expanded outreach, **transportation concerns remained a barrier** for some families, particularly those from more distant or underserved areas.
- While we are encouraged by the progress made in diversifying our applicant pool, the racial, ethnic, and disability representation of our student body still does not fully reflect our largest sending district. We recognize this as an important area for a continued focus. Our English Language Learner (ELL) population, primarily composed of Brazilian students who are classified as white, continues to grow. We remain committed to expanding outreach and support efforts to reach a broader spectrum of racially and linguistically diverse students, as well as students with disabilities.
- A key challenge for AMSA in achieving a student population that reflects the diversity of our region lies in the constraints of the state-mandated lottery system, particularly when one of our core member towns is at or near the Net School Spending (NSS) Cap. Under this system, AMSA must prioritize applications based on residency and cannot actively weight the lottery to increase enrollment of underrepresented groups. When a sending district reaches its NSS cap, fewer seats are available to students from that town, which limits opportunities for outreach to and enrollment of students from racially, ethnically, or economically diverse backgrounds, especially if that town has a more diverse population than others in our region. This created a structural barrier to forming a student body that mirrors the demographics of our largest sending community. (Marlborough was at the NSS cap for last year's lottery.)

Anticipated general recruitment activities intended to reach all students.

General Recruitment Activities for 2025-2026:

Activity 1: Multilingual Postcard Campaign
We will mail vibrant, multilingual postcards (English, Portuguese, Spanish, and Haitian Creole) with AMSA recruitment event details to families in Marlborough, Hudson, Maynard, and Clinton with children ages 8-11. These postcards will highlight ASMA's inclusive academic environment and pathways for students of all backgrounds and abilities.

Activity 2: District-Level Outreach to Newcomer Families
The Executive Director will distribute culturally responsive flyers to superintendents in our core towns with a special request to share them with shelters, newcomer families, and community resource centers.

Activity 3: Inclusive Virtual Information Sessions
Three virtual sessions will be hosted for interested families from our core communities. One session will feature simultaneous Portuguese, Spanish, and Haitian Creole translation. Sessions will include closed captioning in multiple languages and feature AMSA's Special Education Director, ELL Director, Principal, Registrar, and Athletic Director. Families will learn about academic programs, individualized support services, transportation, financial assistance, application details, and student life.

Activity 4: Special Education Support at Community Events
AMSA SEPAC members will participate in both virtual and in-person information events to address how AMSA supports students with disabilities. Families will be invited to follow up with SEPAC for peer connections and additional guidance.

Activity 5: Public Showcases of AMSA Culture
Public events, such as the International Festival (now returning to campus), Spring Arts and Science Night, Drama Society performances, AMSA Community Potluck Nights, and the Annual Golf Tournament, serve as powerful ways for prospective families to see AMSA's inclusive, diverse culture in action.

Activity 6: Community Ambassador Initiative
AMSA families are our strongest ambassadors. This year, we will launch a more structured "Invite-a-Friend" program, encouraging current AMSA families to share school information with neighbors, co-workers, and community members. Materials and small incentives will be provided to support outreach.

Activity 7: Leaders of Tomorrow – Local Impact, Lasting Impressions
Our student group, Leaders of Tomorrow, supported by the Community Outreach Manager, engages in year-round service projects, building relationships with local families and organizations. Their visible, heartfelt work at shelters, soup kitchen, and local events demonstrates AMSA's core values.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Recruitment Plan – 2025-2026 Strategies</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Students with disabilities</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">(a) Charter School Dashboard data

School percentage:
6.4%
CI percentage: 12.9%

The school is <u>below</u>
the CI percentage</td><td>(b) Continued 2024-25 Strategies
The AMSA website will focus on building support from our families.
To enliven parent interest, we are working on creating a new and more inclusive parent group that will attract more families than our continued attempts to recruit SEPAC members have generated. We plan to advertise the new group as the Advocacy Council for Student Support (PACSS) and membership would be open to all our sending district families, especially those with disabilities (IEPs and 504 plans), limited English, and low income.
The Special Education Director will attend at least one Recruitment Parent Information Nights.
We will assess strategy progress in one year.</td></tr>
<tr><td>(c) 2025-26 Additional Strategies
☒ Below CI: list additional and/or enhanced strategies needed.

Accessible and Inclusive Communication
Ensure all recruitment materials (flyers, website content, applications) are available in accessible formats (e.g., large print, screen-reader compatible PDFs, alt text for images, and translated versions in home languages).
Include clear language stating that AMSA welcomes and supports students with disabilities, including information on available services and accommodations.
Highlight Special Education Services
Host virtual and in-person info sessions specifically for families of students with disabilities that highlight:
Special education programming
Inclusion supports
Accessibility initiatives
Success stories of current AMSA students with disabilities
Create a parent guide to special education at AMSA, explaining how IEP and 504 services are provided and how the school collaborates with families
*We will assess these strategies in one year.</td></tr>
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<tr><th colspan="2">English learners</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">(a) Charter School Dashboard data

School percentage:
2.07%
CI percentage: 12.5%

The school is <u>below</u>
the CI percentage</td><td>(b) Continued 2024-25 Strategies
Live interpreters (Spanish and Portuguese) will attend at least one virtual Recruiting Information event.
Student Handbook and most documents are now available in many different languages on the website.
The Executive Director’s Community Newsletter is offered in over 100 languages.
Advertise AMSA’s new Advocacy Council for Student Support (PACSS). Membership would be open to all our sending district families, especially those with students with disabilities (IEPs and 504 plans), limited English, and low income.
The Executive Director will send flyers to the four core town superintendents asking them to distribute information at shelters and to newcomers arriving in their districts.
We will assess the effectiveness of this strategy in one year.</td></tr>
<tr><td>(c) 2025-26 Additional Strategies
☒ Below CI: list additional and/or enhanced strategies needed.

Multilingual Family Ambassadors
Recruit bilingual parent or student ambassadors to assist with outreach, serve as contacts for prospective families, and speak at open houses. (Haitian Creole has been added to our list of predominating languages.)
Feature these ambassadors in short video testimonials or welcome messages in their native language.
ELL Outreach Liaisons
Designate a staff member or outreach coordinator to serve as an ELL family liaison, providing personalized support during the application process.
Offer one-on-one support for families completing the application or navigating the lottery process.
Celebrate Cultural Diversity in Messaging
Use photos and quotes that reflect AMSA’s multilingual and multicultural student body.
Highlight AMSA’s ELL services and success stories, including student growth, graduation rates, and postsecondary success.
*We will assess these strategies in one year.</td></tr>
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<tr><th colspan="2">Low Income</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">(a) Charter School Dashboard data

School percentage: 17.9%
CI percentage: 40.23%

The school is <u>below</u> the CI percentage</td><td>(b) Continued 2024-25 Strategies
The PTO will resume their used uniform sales.
AMSA will target families with 5th graders in core town public schools and invite them to attend meetings that will include information about AMSA’s robust financial assistance policy.
AMSA will increase the uniform assistance for eligible students from $150 to $200 per student
AMSA will continue the Holiday Gift Card program, providing families in need with additional financial support.
Collaborate with local community centers, churches, and organizations that serve low-income families.
Continue to host information sessions and open houses that provide details on AMSA’s financial assistance programs.
Participate in and sponsor community events to raise awareness about AMSA’s free tuition and its financial programs.
Advertise AMSA’s new Advocacy Council for Student Support (PACSS). Membership would be open to all our sending district families, especially those with students with disabilities (IEPs and 504 plans), limited English, and low-income status.
Highlight success stories about current students from underrepresented groups to inspire prospective students and their families.</td></tr>
<tr><td>(c) 2025-26 Additional Strategies
☒ Below CI: list additional and/or enhanced strategies needed.

Clear Communication About Cost-Free Enrollment
Clearly state in all outreach materials that ASMA is a free public charter school, with no tuition, no entrance exams, and no fees to apply.
Emphasize access to free transportation, free/reduced priced meals, and academic support services.
Community-Based Outreach
Distribute flyers and posters in high-traffic, accessible locations:
Housing authority offices
SIC and SNAP program offices
Community health centers
Food pantries and soup kitchens
Libraries and laundromats
Dollar stores and convenience stores
*We will assess these strategies in one year.</td></tr>
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Students who are sub-proficient	**(d) Continued 2024-25 Strategies** **Emphasize Academic Growth, Not Just High Achievement** • Use messaging that highlights AMSA's commitment **to helping all students grow**, no matter where they start academically. • Include phrases like: "*We meet students where they are*" and *"Our goals is growth, confidence, and long-term success."* **Make the Enrollment Process Less Intimidating** • Reassure families that: o There **are no entrance exams or prior achievement requirements to apply**. o AMSA is not just for "gifted" students, but for **any student with a desire to learn and grow**. • Simplify and clarify the application process using family-friendly language. **Host Inclusive Information Sessions** • Create information nights or virtual sessions specifically designed to explain: o How AMSA supports students who struggle academically o What individualized support looks like o How progress is monitored and celebrated • Invite intervention staff or academic support coordinators to speak **We will assess these strategies in one year.*
Students at risk of dropping out of school	• AMSA does not accept applications past grade nine.
Students who have dropped out of school *only schools serving students who are 16 and older	• AMSA does not accept applications past grade nine.

RETENTION PLAN 2025-2026

2024-2025 Implementation Summary
The current retention rate of Advanced Math and Science (AMSA) is 96.5% and has remained in the range of 96% for the 2020-2025 charter term. Our Registrar conducts exit interviews with families of students who transfer out of AMSA to identify why they decide to transfer. AMSA consistently maintains a waitlist of 600-700 students and continues to enroll students throughout the school year without implementing a supplemental lottery. AMSA's Board of Trustees, led by the finance subcommittee, reviewed its financial assistance program in 2023 and significantly increased financial support to economically disadvantaged students, a subgroup often including many English learners. This enhanced financial assistance policy has continued to provide additional access to AMSA's extracurricular offerings, thereby increasing student engagement and sense of belonging. This was a significant area of success for the 2024-2025 retention plan, and we should all take pride in this achievement. AMSA has also successfully offered the Massachusetts Biliteracy State Seal for the sixth year. This initiative encourages a sense of belonging and recognizes students who demonstrate proficiency in English and another language. This year, 21 students in the Class of 2025 earned the Biliteracy State Seal, which is a testament to our commitment to encouraging and celebrating culture and diversity. The AMSA SEPAC was operational this year, but it continues to be a challenge to recruit members. The Special Education Department communicates with their parents about the importance of involvement and engagement with the school and the AMSA community, which provides services as well as camaraderie among parents and students. This past year, AMSA had one general reading teacher who served all students. Next year, reading will be taught by a special education teacher who is receiving ongoing training in Orton-Gillingham (OG) Methodology (*a structured literacy approach primarily used to teach reading, writing, and spelling to individuals with dyslexia and other learning differences*). All general education and students on plans will be serviced by this teacher. The focus will continue to be on developing strong reading goals and closely monitoring progress. Family Engagement was a top priority this past year. AMSA held an ice cream social event for the incoming 6th graders and their families in August 2024. Family Potluck dinners were organized throughout the school year to provide opportunities for our families who come from many sending districts to gather and build community. AMSA's annual International fosters an environment of appreciation and inclusion.

Overall Student Retention Goal	
Annual goal for student retention	96.5%

Retention Plan – 2025-26 Strategies	
Students with disabilities	
(a) Charter School Dashboard data **School percentage**: 7.00% **1 Standard Deviation: 18.73%** The school's attrition rate is <u>below</u> 1 standard deviation	**(b) Continued 2024-25 Strategies** ☒ At or below 1 standard deviation: no enhanced/additional strategies needed • AMSA was able to establish a SEPAC in the 2023-2024 school year. • AMSA will continue to recruit interested and enthusiastic parents who would be able to work closely with the school and the Director of Special Education to develop programs and events that would assist our students with special needs and their families. • Next year, Reading will be taught by a special education teacher who is receiving ongoing training in Orton-Gillingham (OG) Methodology. This teacher has strong experience in developing student goals and conducting progress monitoring for the goals. All general education and students on plans will be serviced by this teacher.
English learners	
(a) Charter School Dashboard data **School percentage**: 0.00% **1 Standard Deviation: 20.55%** The school's attrition rate is <u>below</u> 1 standard deviation	**(b) Continued 2024-25 Strategies** ☒ At or below 1 standard deviation: no enhanced/additional strategies needed • A full-time Reading Specialist provides targeted support. • AMSA's website has a translation function for most content. Through FC 613/332, AMSA has added administrative support to the counseling department, and an academic success coach to the ELL department. • Full-time ELL Director/ELL Teacher who speaks English, Spanish, and Portuguese fluently and is a certified WIDA/ACCESS Administrator. • Create a more inclusive environment for students through additional social connections and community events, such as theme dances, art/science nights, the International Festival, and outstanding citizenship awards. • Offering the opportunity to earn the Seal of Biliteracy to native speakers of foreign languages.

Low Income	
((a) Charter School Dashboard data **School percentage**: 5.50% **1 Standard Deviation: 19.76%** The school's attrition rate is <u>at/below</u> 1 standard deviation	**(b) Continued 2024-25 Strategies** ☒ At or below 1 standard deviation: no enhanced/additional strategies needed Below third quartile: no enhanced/additional strategies needed. • The PTO will continue to hold used uniform sales periodically to assist parents with uniform costs. • AMSA established a *Car-pool Bulletin Board* on the school's website, providing a forum for AMSA families who live outside of Marlborough to communicate with other AMSA families who are looking for less expensive transportation options. • AMSA has a financial assistance policy that clearly states and formalizes financial assistance to economically disadvantaged students for school expenses, such as uniform, transportation, meals, field trips, athletics, and clubs. We hope to see the data change within two years. • Parent volunteer translators to assist with used uniform sales. • The uniform assistance provided to families who are in our free or reduced lunch program will receive gift cards to buy uniforms in the amount of $200 per student, an increase of $50. • AMSA will continue to provide eligible families with Holiday Gift Cards in December.

<u>Students who are sub-proficient</u>	**(d) Continued 2023-24 Strategies** • Through the FC336 Grant, AMSA revamped the Student Support Team process, started a Mental Health Committee that participated in DESE-sponsored professional development, mapped lessons for a new 9th and 10th grade seminar, and forged partnerships with Wayside Youth and Family Support Network, INTERFACE Referral Services, and Challenge Success. • AMSA holds an orientation program in August to assist new students with assimilation.

Students at risk of dropping out of school	**(e) Continued 2024-25 Strategies** • AMSA has established a working rapport with the Marlborough Police Department. AMSA will continue to collaborate with local law enforcement to educate our students about the dangers of engaging in harmful activity that can potentially contribute to challenges at school and the risk of dropping out. • AMSA continues to be a member of the Middlesex Partnership with Youth. Workshops offered include strategies to help eliminate risky behavior among students. • The School Counseling Department will continue to develop curriculum for advisory periods that promote social and emotional health. • The Dean, Associate Dean, and school counselors are continuing to develop the social and emotional curriculum for Lower School studentsdelivered during their Directed Study period. The content addresses issues such as ethics training, character development, bullying, and suicide awareness. We will assess the effectiveness of this strategy at the end of each year. • AMSA continues to run an orientation for new students in August,to provide clear expectations and guidelines for student behavior in the high school, providing the critical attention and focus on social and emotional support. • AMSA continues to implement the SEL screener, Tier 2 Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Groups, and a Tier 1 A program called TRAILS, and contracted with a new referral service (Care Solace). • MCAS preparation classes are offered to students who are still attempting to pass MCAS to achieve AMSA's local graduation requirements.
Students who have dropped out of school *only schools serving students who are 16 and Older	**(f) Continued 2024-25 Strategies** • Students who leave school will be notified annually of their options and available resources for completing high school.