

MSAD Site Council Meeting

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 2:00 PM

Electronic Means

1. Welcome and Roll Call

1.A. New Member

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

3. Old Business

4. New Business

4.A. Election of 2025-2026 Chair and Vice Chair

4.B. Parent-Student Handbook Feedback

4.C. Pickleball Courts and Playground Update

5. Standing Reports

5.A. Policy and Procedure Review

5.B. Superintendent's Report

5.C. Director Reports (Brittany, Jody, Ryan J,
Nichelle, Lance H, Ryan S-H)

5.D. Other Reports (Site Council Board Rep, Student
Body Government, Wellness Committee, Site Council
Chair, etc.)

6. Announcements

7. Adjournment



MSAD SITE COUNCIL – Draft Minutes
Location: Online - Zoom Meeting
Date: April 9th, 2025

Member Attendance

- Marianne Loftus (Parent) - absent
- (Parent) - vacant
- Austin Johnson (Student) - present
- Justine Gonzalez (Teacher) - present
- Christine Adams (Student Life) - present
- Tabitha Anderson (Paraprofessional) - present
- Matt Kevan (Shared/Support Services) - present
- (Alumni/Deaf Community) - vacant
- (Deaf Blind Community) - vacant

Ex Officio Members

- (MADC) - vacant
- (Minnesota Department of Education) - Not available/Serving on the Board
- Terry Wilding (Superintendent) - present
- (MSA Director of Curriculum and Educational Programs) - vacant
- Brittany Thomforde (MSA Director of Student Support Services) - present
- Ryan Johnson (Director) - absent
- Jody Olson (Director) - absent
- Nichelle Steffen (MSA Student Life Director) - present
- Lance Hall (MSA Director of Community Engagement) - present
- Ryan Smith-Hastings (MSAD Athletic Director) - present

1. Welcome and Roll Call – Site Council Chair, Justine Gonzalez, called the meeting to order at 2:20 p.m.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes - Previous meeting minutes were approved.

3. Old Business

- **Dress Code** - This will be addressed later in the spring after more discussions are held. The feedback from the November/December Site Council meetings will be shared.

- **Holidays** - The recently established DEI committee will discuss some guidelines and ideas related to this and share them with the Site Council.
- **Organizational Chart for Parents** - After a few more edits, this chart will be taken to the Department Heads for review.
- **Wellness Policy** - Ryan can provide an update at our next meeting.
- **Naming the MSAD Educational Complex** - A committee will be established to collect a list of nominees with a short bio of each to be sent out to vote. Let Terry know if you are interested in being a part of this committee.
- **Interpreter Support** – Terry will create a document/informational sheet to share.

4. New Business - None

5. Standing Reports

- **Policy and Procedure Review**
 - **Student Records and Privacy Rights** – The Policy Committee and ILT want feedback from the Site Council. Within this policy, there is a directory that has public information available to anyone that asks for it. Some are questioning if we are sharing too much information. Site Council members agreed that the student’s resident district should be removed, but their hometown should be included. Parents’ addresses and phone numbers should be removed, along with the students' enrollment period.
- **Superintendent’s Report**
 - MSAD hosted the 2025 ECE Summit. Thank you to Ryan and the committee and all those that were involved. It was well attended with about 75 participants. There were good exhibits and guest speakers as well. Initial feedback has been very positive. It was well organized, and people were very hospitable and welcoming. Good information was shared. It was a good representation of our school. A survey will be sent soon seeking feedback from attendees. We will be hosting the CEASD Conference next year.
 - MSA has hired a new HR Director, Heather Smisek. She will be trained in next week.
 - There are concerns about the possibility of the Department of Education closing and the effect it could have on us, our finances, IDEA and the programs that are vital to our education. There are so many unknowns; we’ll have to wait and see. CEASD, MDE, MASE, MASA and other organizations are contacting legislators and keeping a close eye on how things progress.
 - The state legislature is moving slowly. The budget/proposals are still there. We don’t foresee an increase. We’ll have to be careful planning next year’s budget. More information should come around the third week of May.
 - More students are being referred for the Day Treatment Program and it could be opening soon.
- **Director Reports**
 - **MSA Student Life Director, Nichelle Steffen**
 - Student Life will host some of the Day Treatment students. We are looking forward to collaborating and communicating to support these students.
 - Staff interviews/hirings are still happening. It’s a slow process. Two 36-hours positions are now vacant.
 - Three new students have joined the dorm.

- Lots of events are happening such as track practices and meets, dress shopping for Prom, gymnastics for the elementary group, etc.
- **MSA Student Support Services Director, Brittany Thomforde**
 - There was a meeting with VONA staff today to finalize items for the Day Treatment Program. A start date will be announced soon.
 - The referral deadline for ESY is this Friday. We have 56 referrals for both MSAD and MSAB at this time.
- **MSA Community Engagement Director, Lance Hall**
 - For the past two years, MSA has been working with the River Bend Nature Center on the Nature Everywhere Grant, which promotes the use of natural spaces as playgrounds. The Nature Center Director, Brad Bourn, feels that Faribault has a unique opportunity, with the Deaf and Blind communities in town and our Somali population, to partner and make sure we are inclusive to all, especially youth. We've developed an Outdoor Bill of Rights which is being presented to the board and city council for approval.
 - Next year's school calendar has been posted to our website.
 - Our 100th student joined us last week. Our student body has increased by 55 students in the last two years.
 - We have some new family tours coming up, as well as a Winona school district tour and a tour for Bemidji High School's ASL Classes.
 - We will host booths at the Deaf Culture, Language, and Careers event on April 12 in White Bear Lake and the Hearing Loss Resource Fair in St. Paul on April 24.
 - The final two Road Trips of the school year will be April 26 in Willmar and the May trip will be to Winona.
 - Family Learning Weekend, formerly known as Family Immersion Weekend, will be held the first weekend in June. We have two families signed up so far.
- **MSAD Athletic Director, Ryan Smith-Hastings**
 - The cheerleading competition at RIT was a success. In the small group division, we won the sportsmanship award, best spirit video, took second place overall and had one all-star cheerleader.
 - There has been one track meet so far and there is another tomorrow. Friday, the team will fly out for the Berg/Seeger Track & Field Classic in Texas. The number of participants is good this year. There will be eleven total track meets.
 - We will host the ASL Bowl on April 25 and the GPSD Track Meet on April 26.
 - The SAA Banquet will be held on May 15 in the evening for 6-12 graders.
 - The elementary students will have an indoor soccer game with MDS on April 16.
 - The track team got new uniforms and warmups using some of the money from T-Mobile.
- **Other Reports** - Nothing at this time.

6. Announcements

- At the next meeting, we will elect new officers for the 2025-2026 school year.

- Continue to recruit new members for our vacant positions.

7. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 3pm.