

Special Board Meeting

Wednesday, August 20, 2025 6:00 PM

Lysen Hall, MSAB Campus, 400 SE 6th Ave, Faribault, MN 55021

1. Call to Order:

2. Action Items:

2.A. June MSA Board Meeting Minutes for Approval

2.B. Set the MSA Board/Committee Meeting Schedule

2.C. Standing Committee Review and Appointments

2.D. Out of State Travel

2.E. Site Council Appointments

3. Information Items:

3.A. Overview of Dorm Redesign

4. Adjourn



Minutes of Regular Board Meeting

Minnesota State Academies Board

A Regular Board Meeting of the Minnesota State Academies Board was held Wednesday, June 25, 2025, beginning at 6:00 PM in the MSAD Wilkins Hall, 615 Olof Hanson Drive, Faribault, MN 55021.

Present: Mary Cashman-Bakken, Annette Freiheit, Sara Pratt, Katie Wangberg, Oluwagbenga Ogungbe.

Absent: Hernan Moncada, Jamers Speier.

Ex-Oficio Present: Superintendent Terry Wilding, MSAD Site Council Representative Sonny Wasilowski.

1. Call to Order

Chair Freiheit called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Adoption of Agenda

Mary Cashman-Bakken shared that she received two letters from concerned community members, which will be addressed during the public comment period. Motion to approve the agenda as drafted. This motion, made by Mary Cashman-Bakken and seconded by Sara Pratt, passed.

4. Public Comment:

Mary Cashman-Bakken summarized the two letters she received expressing concern over a MSAD director leaving for another job opportunity. The letters requested transparent communication about MSAD's next steps. Chair Freiheit acknowledged receipt of the same letters and noted the feedback would be taken into consideration.

5. Consent Agenda

A. MSA May Board Meeting Minutes for Approval

B. Human Resources Report

C. Donations

D. MSA and Faribault Public Schools Tuition Agreement for 2025-2026

Sonny Wasilowski requested that the May 25 meeting minutes be pulled from the consent agenda for discussion.

Sara Pratt moved to approve the consent agenda, excluding the May 25 meeting minutes. Seconded by Mary Cashman-Bakken, the motion passed.

Sonny requested some corrections for the minutes, and recommended that formal titles be used in the minutes. Katie Wangberg moved to approve the May 25

meeting minutes as written. Seconded by Mary Cashman-Bakken, the motion passed.

6. Policies

A. Policies for Reauthorization

- 1. 410 Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)**
- 2. 413 Harassment and Violence**
- 3. 414 Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect or Physical or Sexual Abuse**
- 4. 415 Mandated Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults**
- 5. 506 Student Discipline**
- 6. 522 Student Sex, Gender, Gender Identity Nondiscrimination**
- 7. 806 Crisis Management**

Sonny Wasilowski stated that the MSAD Site Council hadn't reviewed Policy 506. He asked about implementation of Part 3, Section H. Superintendent Wilding explained that this would be done through our school programs, according to our campus rules and the expectation that our staff would communicate opportunities for collaboration with the community.

Mary Cashman-Bakken made a motion to reauthorize policies 410, 413, 414, 415, 506, 522, and 806. Katie Wangberg seconded, and the motion passed.

B. New or Updated Policies (Second Reading) for Approval

- 1. 121 Communication, Language, and Accessibility**
- 2. 417 Chemical Use and Abuse**
- 3. 418 Drug-Free Workplace and Drug-Free School**
- 4. 419 Tobacco-Free Environment**
- 5. 425 Staff Development**
- 6. 441 On-Call Coverage**
- 7. 442 Braille Competency and Blind Awareness Training**
- 8. 443 Staff American Sign Language (ASL) Proficiency**
- 9. 515 Protection and Privacy of Student Records**
- 10. 601 School Curriculum and Instructional Goals**
- 11. 603 Curriculum Development**
- 12. 606 Textbooks and Instructional Materials**
- 13. 608 Instructional Services - Special Education**
- 14. 741 Reimbursement of Activity Expenses**

Superintendent Wilding explained that the proposed policies were reviewed twice by the policy committee, as well as the Board through a first reading. Sonny Wasilowski noted that the MSAD Site Council had not had the opportunity to review policy #606. He added that he thought legal references were missing, specifically 125A.62 Subd. 4 ("most beneficial, least restrictive program") and language related to parent and community engagement. He recommended pulling Policy 606 from the vote for further review. Superintendent Wilding responded that Policy 606 is based on the MSBA model policy but the policy committee can look at future policies and language from 125A.62.

Katie Wangberg expressed concerns that Sonny Wasilowski has frequently

participated in the discussion without being recognized by the Board Chair. As an ex-officio member, Sonny may participate in discussions on public matters but may not vote and is not counted towards quorum. As a representative of the Site Council, he is expected to bring feedback and input from the Site Council. Katie then asked where Sonny is obtaining his input. Sonny stated that he has been in email communications with other Site Council members and his community for feedback. Superintendent Wilding noted that moving forward, the ex-officio site council representative role will be clarified, specifically on facilitating information shared from the Site Councils.

Mary Cashman Bakken made a motion to approve Policies 121, 417, 418, 419, 425, 441, 442, 443, 515, 601, 603, 606, 608, and 741. Sara Pratt seconded the motion, which passed.

C. Policies for First Reading

- 1. 452 Staff Use of Electronic Communication and Technology**
- 2. 524 Student Use of Electronic Communication and Technology**
- 3. 525 Violence Prevention**
- 4. 616 School Accountability**

No vote required. Superintendent Wilding is asking the Board to review the policies as part of the review process (first reading). The original communication and technology policy combined students and staff in one policy; it is now separated into two. The updates include stronger support for the use of technology in our curriculum.

Chair Freiheit asked the meaning of the colored font. Red text means new language; and blue is rewritten content for improved readability (less legal jargon).

Mary Cashman-Bakken asked whether AI was used in rewording.

Superintendent Wilding replied he did use AI to generate suggestions for the student handbook and to evaluate reading levels of the writing.

Sonny Wasilowski commented on Policy 616, recommending the “most beneficial, least restrictive” language to the legal references.

Chair Freiheit wished to thank the Policy Committee for their hard work over the past year.

7. Action Items

A. Changes to the MSA Student Handbook

Superintendent Wilding explained that portions of the handbook were rearranged to place program information before disciplinary policies. Chair Freiheit asked about the fees for MSAB, and whether the handbooks are reviewed with students and staff. Superintendent Wilding explained that MSAB does not charge activity fees, due to the small number of participants, but dorm and after-school program fees will apply. The handbook is reviewed annually at the start of each school year.

Sonny Wasilowski shared feedback from the Site Council meeting, in which there was a discussion about equity and the perception that the Deaf school feels more institutionalized with fewer student freedoms, and shared an example

of allowing students to drive themselves/leave campus. Superintendent Wilding acknowledged that was discussed, but emphasized the need to balance independence with student safety and liability concerns. Chair Freiheit stated that in her 34 years of experience, she has never seen a high school allow students to leave mid-day. Sara Pratt noted that at her district, students can leave during lunch break only if they maintain good grades. However, families trust MSA to keep students safe, so all factors must be considered. Sonny Wasilowski then asked for clarification in the overview language (Section 1, Part C) regarding information on the Board. Oluwabenga Ogungbe moved to approve the 2025-2026 MSA student handbook, and was seconded by Katie Wangberg. Passed.

B. MSHSL Membership and Voting Members

Superintendent Wilding explained that annually, the Board selects a representative to vote on behalf of both campuses. Sara Pratt moved to appoint Katie Wangberg as the MSHSL representative for both campuses. Mary Cashman-Bakken seconded, and the motion passed.

C. Changes to the MSA Organizational Chart

Superintendent Wilding announced that Ryan Johnson, MSAD Director, is resigning and relocating to Florida. After collecting feedback and consulting with Human Resources and the Executive Committee, he is recommending a return to a single-director model (instead of the current co-director structure). This feedback also echoed the concerns in the two letters the Board members received.

The recommended changes include:

- Hiring an additional supervisor who will supervise the paraprofessionals (MSAB currently has a paraprofessional supervisor; MSAD does not)
- Converting one of the current co-director positions to an assistant director to focus on student development and supports, including programming and mental health supports.

According to Superintendent Wilding, the new structure will improve accountability and better support students and staff, and address longstanding concerns from paraprofessionals. Katie Wangberg shared that the Executive committee also supported the single-director model. Justin Cyboron will oversee curriculum, outreach, the online academy, and the day treatment program. Jody Olson will transition into a new role. The changes are included in next year's budget.

Chair Freiheit asked about licensure. The director and assistant director positions require principal licenses, while the paraprofessional supervisor position does not require licensure, but candidates must have supervisory experience. The director position would continue to be under Superintendent Wilding's supervision, although the assistant director and paraprofessional supervisor will also serve on the Instructional Leadership Team.

Sonny Wasilowski asked that the site council be included in future organization structure discussions. Superintendent Wilding explained that this was finalized

after the Site Council meetings ended for the school year, but he reiterated that staff, students and families were all consulted through surveys and meetings throughout the past year.

Mary Cashman-Bakken moved to approve the MSA organizational structure changes, which was seconded by Sara Pratt. Motion passed.

D. Site Council Bylaws Adjustment

As discussed in May, quorum challenges continue, especially for community and parent representatives. Superintendent Wilding is proposing the following changes:

- Combining the two parent representative positions into one.
- Merging the DeafBlind Member position on both site councils with the respective Blind Community Member/Deaf Community Member positions.

This would help increase the likelihood of achieving quorum (revised to require 4 out of 7 instead of 5 out of 9), and foster more meaningful discussions. Sonny Wasilowski confirmed that the MSAD Site Council discussed and supported the changes. They also want to be more involved in decision-making processes. Sara Pratt motioned to approve the Site Council Bylaws changes. Seconded by Mary Cashman-Bakken, the motion passed.

E. Out of State Travel Requests

Superintendent Wilding and John Davis, MSAB Director, are requesting approval for out-of-state travel to participate in the CEASD fall board meeting (in Connecticut) and the COSB conference (in Kentucky), respectively. John serves on the COSB board, and brings back valuable resources from the conference to MSAB. Superintendent Wilding is on the CEASD board, which focuses on national efforts in deaf education and staff recruitment. MSA will be hosting next year's CEASD conference here in Minnesota.

Mary Cashman-Bakken moved to approve Superintendent Wilding and John Davis' out-of-state travel requests. Sara Pratt seconded the motion, and it passed.

F. Adoption of FY 2025-2026 Budget

Superintendent Wilding reported a small funding increase. We will be allowed to rollover remaining funds from this year, which will be helpful in balancing the budget. However, due to a predicted state shortfall, MSA will be conservative and closely monitor all financial activity.

Sonny Wasilowski noted the budget was not reviewed by the Site Council. He requested a visual breakdown (i.e.: how athletic funds are spent) and also that future budget reports be reviewed by the Site Councils.

Amber Miller, Fiscal Services Director, explained that the current monthly reports submitted to the Board include breakdowns, and this proposed budget is an overview of projected expenses. Sports budgets vary due to fees, participation, and other factors. Additional details can be shared with the Finance Committee.

G. Name MDE Identified Official with Authority

This is an annual requirement to designate one person authorized to manage MDE permissions. Sara Pratt moved to name Superintendent Terry Wilding as the MDE IOwA, with Kim Barron as proxy, with a second by Katie Wangberg. Motion passed.

H. Board Resolutions to Recognize Retirees with 25+ Years of Service:

- **Victoria Akemann, 50 Years**
- **Sandy Caron, 25 Years**
- **Lori-Ann Doane, 29 Years**
- **Tamera Weller, 38 Years**

Note: Victoria Akemann passed away shortly after her retirement. She was the second-longest serving employee, and will be honored posthumously.

Mary Cashman-Bakken moved to approve Board resolutions for Victoria Akemann, Sandy Caron, Lori-Ann Doane, and Tamera Weller for 25+ years of service. Seconded by Chair Freiheit, the motion passed.

I. Board Resolution to Recognize Outgoing Board Member Mary Cashman-Bakken

The Board expressed its deep appreciation for Mary's contributions to MDE and MSA. Mary shared that she looks forward to golfing, traveling, and spending more time with family. MDE has not yet named her replacement.

Katie Wangberg made the motion to approve the Board resolution to recognize Mary Cashman-Bakken for her years of service. Sara Pratt seconded, and the motion passed.

J. Election of Officers

After the Board discussed interest in the officer positions, Katie Wangberg motioned to approve Annette Freiheit as Chair, Sara Pratt as Vice Chair, and Katie Wangberg as the Officer of Business Affairs. Sara Pratt seconded, and the motion passed.

K. Standing Committee Review and Appointments

The Board members expressed interest in the following committees:

- Policy – Katie Wangberg
- Finance - Sara Pratt
- School Operations - Katie Wangberg

Final appointments were tabled until the August meeting. Missing board members will be contacted via email for their preferences.

L. Set the MSA Board/Committee Meeting Schedule

The Board discussed the preferred time for Board meetings. Katie Wangberg moved to schedule board meetings at 6:00 pm during the warm months (April – November), and at 1:00 during the winter months (December – March).

Seconded by Oluwagbenga Ogungbe, the motion passed.

The Board retreat will be tentatively scheduled for the first week of October, and will coincide with a joint Site Council meeting. Sonny Wasilowski expressed interest in having the site council representatives serve on some board committees. Kim Barron will work with Chair Freiheit and Superintendent Wilding in finalizing the board meeting dates.

8. Information Items:

A. Review Board Code of Conduct

Clarification is needed regarding the 80% attendance rule.

B. Superintendent's Report

1. Legislative Audit Update

We did not receive design funds but were granted \$1 million in additional AP funds. This year's bonding request will be re-submitted. Construction plans may need adjustments. While costs are rising (particularly food), no staff or program cuts are expected at this time.

Sonny Wasilowski requested construction updates and formation of a legislative committee at the August meeting.

C. Director's Reports

**1. Introduction of Director of Curriculum and Educational Programs:
Justin Cyboron**

Justin Cyboron comes from Iowa, and is excited to work with us. He is currently working on planning for the fall.

2. Fiscal Services Director: Amber Miller

a. FY Year-to-Date Report

Amber is reviewing account balances, and shared some examples of cost-saving measures, such as energy-efficient upgrades, which helps reduce utility costs.

9. Board Committee Reports

A. Site Council Reports

The May meeting minutes will be included in the next Board meeting.

B. Executive Committee

C. Policy Committee

10. Announcements:

None.

**11. Closed Meeting to Evaluate Superintendent Wilding's Performance
(Minnesota State Statute 13D.05, Subd. 3(a))**

Chair Freiheit made a motion to close the meeting under MN State Statute 13D.05, Subd. 3(a) for the purpose of evaluating Superintendent Wilding's performance.

Seconded by Mary Cashman-Bakken, the motion passed.

The meeting closed at 8:34 pm. During the closed meeting, the Board reviewed Superintendent Wilding's performance during the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Katie Wangberg moved to reopen the Board meeting, and was seconded by Sara Pratt. The motion passed.

12. Adjourn

Katie Wangberg moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Sara Pratt, the motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Board Meetings/Board Committee Meetings for July 2025-June 2026

Draft for consideration

1) Board retreats –

- **1 Retreat:** October 2-3, 2025

2) Board meetings –

10 meetings

Agenda: Chair of the Board and Superintendent

Minutes: Superintendent's Executive Aide

On Wednesdays of selected months 6:00 pm during warm months (August – October, April – June), 1:00 pm during winter months (November – March)

- August 20
- September 17
- October 22
- November 19
- December 17
- January – **no meeting, MSBA Conference January 15-16**
- February 11
- March 11
- April 15
- May 13
- June 17 (Superintendent Evaluation/Organizational Meeting/Election of Officers)

3) Site Council Meetings –

9 meetings each campus (18 meetings in total)

Membership: Defined in each Site Council's bylaws

Chairs: As elected for each Site Council

Agenda: Directors and Chairs of Site Councils

Minutes: Director's Administrative Assistant

Wednesday/Thursday of 1st full week (M-F) of each month - 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

- Joint Site Council – September 10 (election of officers for 2025-2026)
- Joint Site Council – meeting with Board October 2
- MSAD – November 5
- MSAB – November 6
- MSAD – December 3
- MSAB – December 4
- Joint Site Council - January 7
- MSAD – February 4
- MSAB – February 5
- MSAD – March 4
- MSAB – March 5
- MSAD – April 8
- MSAB – April 9
- MSAD – May 7 (election of officers for 2026-2027)
- MSAB – May 8 (election of officers for 2026-2027)

4) Executive Committee Meetings –

5 meetings (and special meetings as needed throughout the year)

Membership: Chair, Vice-Chair, Officer of Business Affairs, and Superintendent

Chair: Chair of the Board

Agenda: Chair of the Board and Superintendent

Minutes: Superintendent's Executive Aide

Selected Dates – 3:15 pm

- September 8 (Plan for Board Retreat)
- January 12
- March 16
- June 8 (Plan for Summer Retreat, Meeting schedule, etc.)

5) Finance Committee Meetings –

4 meetings (and special meetings as needed throughout the year)

Membership: Director of Fiscal Services, Superintendent, two board members, one MSA Administrator

*Financial reports will continue to be sent for every board meeting.

Chair: Director of Fiscal Services

Agenda: Director of Fiscal Services and Officer of Business Affairs

Minutes: MSA Administrator's Administrative Assistant

Selected Dates – 3:15 pm

- September 22
- January 13
- April 6
- June 9 – (Final review of 2025-2026 budget for Board approval)

6) Policy Committee Meetings –

11 meetings

Membership: Two Board Members; Superintendent; Director of Human Resources; two MSA Administrators

Chair: Superintendent

Agenda: Superintendent

Minutes: MSA Administrator's Administrative Assistant

Selected Dates – 3:15 pm

- September 3
- October 6
- November 3
- December 1
- January 26
- February 23

- March 30
- April 27
- May 18 (Annual policies and student handbook)
- June 8 (if needed)

7) School Operations Committee –

3 meetings (and special meetings as needed throughout the school year)

Membership (4): 2 Board Members, Superintendent, MSAB Director, MSAD Director, MSA Student Life Director

Ex-Officio Members: Two teacher representatives – one from each campus – will be invited to participate in school calendar development

Chair: One of the Board Members

Agenda: Chair of the School Operations Committee and Superintendent

Minutes: Superintendent's Executive Aide

Selected Dates – 3:15 pm

- December 2 – Review feedback from stakeholders re: school calendar – discuss components of draft calendar.
- January 5 – Review draft calendar and feedback from stakeholders. Recommend changes to draft & determine if additional information is needed.
- January 23 – Finalize calendar draft for board approval

Minnesota State Academies Governing Board Standing Committees 2025-2026

To serve the students, community and greater Minnesota, the Board is permitted to designate standing committees to conduct preparatory work on key matters that will likely be considered by the Board as a whole. Each Committee may be comprised of members of the Board, district staff, and key stakeholders. The Board Chair appoints Committee chairs and members after the Board's annual meeting.

MSA Governing Board – Standing Committees

Executive Committee

Members: Chair **Dr. Annette Freiheit**, Vice Chair **Sara Pratt**, Officer of Business Affairs **Katie Wangberg**
Superintendent **Terry Wilding**

Purpose/Function:

- Review the Board Operations Manual as needed.
- Review State Statutes pertaining to the Academies as needed.
- Review long term plans and operations of MSA prior to the presentation to the Board.
- Utilize a data driven tool, process, and timeline for ongoing evaluation of the superintendent.

Agenda: Board Chair and Superintendent

Minutes: Executive Aide (Kim Barron)

School Operations Committee

Members: **Dr. Annette Freiheit (Committee Chair)**, **Hernan Moncada**, **Jamers Speier**, **Katie Wangberg**; Human Resources Director **Heather Smisek**, Superintendent **Terry Wilding**

Ex-Officio: (for calendar planning) MSAB Director **John Davis**, MSAD Directors (**to be determined**), MSA Director of Student Support Services **Brittany Thomforde**, MSA Student Life Director **Nichelle Steffen** (and two teacher representatives for calendar planning)

Purpose/Function:

- Develop the annual school calendar, and review the organizational chart as needed

Agenda: Committee Chair (Board Member) and Superintendent

Minutes: Executive Aide (Kim Barron)

Finance Committee

Members: MSA Director of Fiscal Services **Amber Miller (Committee Chair)**, MSA Superintendent **Terry Wilding**, **Oluwagbenga Ogungbe**, **Jamers Speier**, **Sara Pratt**, MSA Student Support Services Director **Brittany Thomforde**, MSAB Director **John Davis**

Purpose/ Function:

- Review reports and provides input for matters related to MSA finances.

Agenda: MSA Director of Fiscal Services (Chair) and Officer of Business Affairs

Minutes: Administrative Assistant (Mandy Beucler)

Policy Committee

Members: Superintendent **Terry Wilding (Committee Chair)**, MSA Human Resource Director **Heather Smisek**, **Katie Wangberg**, **Hernan Moncada**, MSA Director of Curriculum and Educational Programs **Justin Cyboron**, MSA Director of Student Support Services **Brittany Thomforde**

Purpose/Function:

- Review and propose changes to policies for MSA

Agenda: Superintendent (Chair) and Director of Human Resources

Minutes: Executive Aide (Kim Barron)/Human Resources Administrative Assistant (to be determined)

Out of State Travel

MSAD Volleyball Game

Staff: Jessica Rademacher, 2nd coach TBD

Dates: 9/26/2025 – 9/28/2025

Event: Volleyball tournament during Michigan School for the Deaf's weekend festival, Flint, Michigan

Justification: MSAD was invited to participate, and there are limited opportunities to play against other Deaf schools.

Estimated expenses: \$240 for two nights lodging for the bus driver. Students and coaches will stay overnight at the Michigan School for the Deaf.

MSAD Football and Volleyball Games

Staff: Ryan Smith-Hastings, Kiefer Anderson, David Nathanson, Kali Bissell, and Jessica Rademacher

Dates: 10/3/25-10/5/25

Event: Football and Volleyball games at Iowa School for the Deaf's Homecoming weekend, Council Bluffs, Iowa

Justification: MSAD was invited to participate

Estimated expenses: \$240 for two nights lodging for the bus driver. Students and coaches will stay overnight at the Iowa School for the Deaf.

MSAD Volleyball Tournament

Staff: Jessica Rademacher, Kali Bissell

Dates: 10/9/25-10/12/25

Event: Great Plains School for the Deaf Volleyball Tournament, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Justification: This is an annual GPSD volleyball tournament.

Estimated expenses: \$3,300 for airfare. Students and coaches will stay overnight at the New Mexico School for the Deaf.

Professional Development

Staff: Kristin Deml

Dates: 11/5/25 – 11/8/25

Event: Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference in Huntsville, Alabama

Justification: This would be a truly valuable and timely opportunity for me (Kristin) as a Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired (TBVI) working here in Minnesota. One of the biggest challenges I face in this role is the lack of local training opportunities focused specifically on literacy for students who are blind or visually impaired. Minnesota does offer some professional development for special education, but there's almost nothing that speaks directly to the unique learning needs of our students – especially when it comes to teaching them how to read, write, and communicate in accessible and meaningful ways. The GITWL conference is one of the only national events dedicated to this exact topic, and attending would help me gain tools and strategies that I simply can't access here at home. This conference also brings together TBVIs, researchers, and specialists from all over the country. In our field, it's easy to feel isolated – we often work alone or in small teams, and we don't always have peers nearby who understand the specific challenges we face. GITWL offers a rare chance to connect with others who do this work every day. It's a chance to learn from them, share ideas, and build relationships that could lead to future collaboration or mentorship. These conversations are often where the most meaningful learning happens. I'm also excited about the chance to explore new tools, tactile materials, and assistive technologies that are designed specifically for visually impaired students. Staying up to date with these resources help me better serve my students – and it helps me support other teachers and families too. I plan to bring back what I learn and share it with our team so we can all benefit from the knowledge and insight this conference offers. Above all, I see this as an investment not just in my own professional growth, but in the students I serve. Helping blind and visually impaired students develop literacy is one of the most important parts of my job. It lays the foundation for everything else – independence, academic success, and self-confidence. Attending this conference would give me practical strategies and fresh inspiration to continue that work in the best possible way.

Estimated expenses:

- \$300 airfare

- \$500 lodging
- \$200 meals
- \$325 registration
- \$250 transportation
- **\$1575 total**