

Board Retreat Day 2

Friday, October 3, 2025 9:00 AM

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

1. **8:00 - 10:15 AM - Strategic Plan Discussion**
2. **10:30 - 11:30 AM - MSAB Showcase**
3. **12:15 - 12:45 PM - Review of Cognia Accreditation**
4. **12:45 - 2:00 PM - 2025-2026 School Goals and Action Steps**
5. **Adjourn**

School Climate

Strategic Goal: Minnesota State Academies (MSA) is a place where all are welcomed, informed, involved and safe.

5-Year Goal: Minnesota State Academies (MSA) will create and implement systems for timely, consistent and effective internal and external communications, student support and professional development.

Objective 1: Establish mechanisms for improving internal communication

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

1. Established weekly updates from the superintendent's office
2. Established weekly newsletters from the Director of Student Support Services
3. Established monthly newsletters from the directors
4. Increased frequency of department meetings and communication
5. Weekly updates from school directors
6. Infrastructure in place for mass communication system; utilization of the system is in-progress.
7. Daily Morning Announcements and daily attendance docs
8. Committee meeting monthly to discuss school climate
9. MSAD Directors do regular check in meetings with teachers (2022-2023)
10. MSAD Directors started hosting joint meetings with teachers and paraprofessionals to improve communication (2022-2023)
11. SWIS reporting system & follow up (data based)
12. MSA APP
13. Annual Climate surveys
14. Caught in Action videos and messages
15. Increased use of Google Hangouts to communicate quickly
16. MSAD Athletic Director and Student Life Activities Coordinator send out weekly activities and rosters
17. Increased use of Loom Videos for ASL access
18. Increased use of Zoom meetings
19. Established monthly HR newsletters
20. Use of BrightArrow for distribution of emails (mostly external but used internally occasionally)
21. Communication shared regularly with staff about due process (via monthly hands-on training; newsletters, and other means)

Steering committee feedback on Objective 1:

- Student perspective: communications are still happening last-minute

- Board not receiving updates/newsletters from B campus

Objective 2: Establish mechanisms for improving external communication with parents/families

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

1. Established weekly updates from the superintendent's office
2. Established monthly newsletters from the directors
3. Supported Webinars (sponsored by PTSA) (Spring 2022)
4. Hosted open forums and discussions on specific topics (COVID, safety, World's Best WorkForce, Corridor Naming, etc.)
5. Established weekly newsletter featuring highlights of the week for parents (Dorm)
6. New Website
7. Teachers and case managers contact families regularly with updates
8. Utilizing BrightArrow along with PowerSchool to get communications out
9. After School Activities information sent out weekly
10. Revived PTSA Organization
11. Community Engagement position opened and filled (Lance Hall)
12. Family Immersion Weekends (MSAD)
13. Parent Child Institutes (MSAB)
14. Virtual ASL Literacy nights
15. Parent Satisfaction surveys
16. Low Vision Clinics (2X)
17. Revived Hilltoppers Athletic Booster Club (2022-2023)
18. Started Parent-Teacher Conferences - 2X a year (2018)
19. Increased Social Media Presence
20. Schoology and PowerSchool Parent Workshops
21. Utilization of Zoom to increase parent participation in IEP meetings/other communication

Objective 3: Establish mechanisms for improving external communications with partners/stakeholders

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

1. Increased presence on Social Media
2. Increased live streaming of events on campus
3. Community forums
4. Updated Websites (new provider/new look) (2019 and 2023)
5. Weekly promotional webinars about MSAD programs (May 2022)
6. Provided presentations during Collaborative Experience D/HH Conference (November 2022)

7. Participated in Faribault Futures Programs
8. Sent staff to state-wide community of practice meetings
9. SLP and ASL specialist presented at SLP conference (2022 Fall)
10. Revived Hilltoppers Athletic Booster Club
11. Community Engagement position
12. 4th music video

Steering Committee Feedback:

- Add data on conferences/exhibit booths
- Bring back live streaming of all games
- BVI/DHH advisory committee participation
- List of advisory committees - add
- St. Cloud State University collaboration
- ASL classes for parents via Zoom
- ASL classes for professionals
- Student created podcasts
- Special interest groups involved in our site council
- National organizations - conferences, etc

Objective 4: Establish mechanisms for ensuring student and staff safety and a positive working/learning environment

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

1. Updated COOP
2. Updated Crisis Response Plan
3. Continued emergency drills
4. Development of new Guide to Emergency Responses
5. Morale Committee Activities
6. School Spirit Days
7. Spirit activities for staff
8. Staff social after work
9. Mental Health Forums
10. SEL classes weekly
11. PLC trainings for staff on trauma informed approaches
12. PBIS trainings and programming
13. School-wide activities and mix it up lunch
14. Student and staff send off athletics and extracurricular teams
15. Weekly meetings with dorm students and staff
16. AIP program (academic intervention program)
17. Student Support Team meetings
18. Elective classes (Art, photography, drama arts, robotics)

19. Field trip checklists
20. International trips (Thailand, Costa Rica, Paris)
21. Pathways to Life transition program
22. Annual Unity day event with both MSAB and MSAD students together
23. Mentoring lunch for students of color, LGBTQ students
24. 18-21 transition program, more jobs off campus
25. Chinese immersion classes (partner with St. Cloud State University: Confucius Class).
26. Climate surveys
27. Educational Center tutors (licensed staff)

Steering Committee Feedback:

- Not enough safety drills conducted for students at D campus/changes were not communicated with students
- PBIS/SWIS
- Security corridor in progress
- MSAB doorbell camera system
- Wilkins doorbell light
- MSA key system
- Flipped locking system installed on B classroom doors
- RIT dual credit classes (add to Instruction & Assessment)
- Scenario-based discussions instead of drills, but need better communication
- New ID badges and restructuring of access levels
- Replacement of some campus security cameras
- FYI: 988 text for mental health services
- Universal design/accessibility projects (i.e. painting pillars/contrasting colors on walls), stairs need more contrast strips
- Kits containing smocks, background drops, tripods, and other accessible materials placed in all meeting/public places
- A lot of energy was spent on keeping our students/staff safe during the pandemic (safety plan, etc)
- New accessibility lift in Noyes
- Textured sidewalk/improved accessibility for bus loading zones for MSAB
- New sidewalk for bus loading at Tate
- Check AP funding records for dates/other improvements
- HVAC replacement - B campus
- HVAC air filtration during pandemic

- **Bullying reporting system for students**

Objective 5: Establish mechanisms for providing professional development for all staff

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

1. **Established PLC schedule**
2. **Increased opportunities for Professional Development at the beginning of the school year**
3. **Added Infinitec online training opportunities**
4. **Increased PD opportunities through MMB**
5. **Cultural Awareness training for teachers, paraprofessionals, and student life staff (CC training)**
6. **Book Study groups (teachers, administrators, others)**
7. **Trauma informed training for teachers, paras and dorm staff (Hope and Healing)**
8. **Neurodiverse committee**
9. **Increase in technology use after 2020 (Loom, Canva, Zoom, Schoology, SeeSaw)**
10. **Technology coaches**

Needs:

1. **Mass communication**
2. **Outreach program**
3. **Reading specialist**
4. **Autism specialist**
5. **More partnerships between school and dorm**
6. **More regular check ins with paras**
7. **Consistent platforms for communication (currently have two platforms: Google and 365)**

Steering Committee Feedback:

- **Already have autism specialist**
- **In our videos/promotional materials - be sure to include DeafBlind services/HH/students with other needs**
- **National counseling conference**
- **Expanded professional development opportunities**
- **Policy for staff to share info they receive from conferences**
- **Braille/blind awareness/ASL classes offered to staff**
- **FYI: HKNC has good resources/CEUs can be earned**
- **Bedrock and 6+1**

- **Staff in non-instructional departments also receive professional development/training**
- **Assistive Technology Committee (shares tips regularly)**
- **Including paraprofessionals in teacher trainings**

For the next cycle:

- **Improve student communication**
- **Strengthen our art offerings**
- **Mental health/wellness committee monthly tips (established during pandemic, bring that back)**

Student Life

Strategic Goal: The Student Life program supports and develops educational goals by providing student-centered programs, activities and social opportunities that allow all day and residential students to discover self-identity and enrich their lives now and in the future.

5 Year Goal: Student Life will provide an increasing array of quality programs and activities, facilitated by appropriately trained staff that result in higher student engagement and maximize services and resources between both campuses.

Objective 1: Establish a mechanism for improving the quality of Student Life activities, the level of student engagement in planning and participation, and the most effective use of resources

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

1. Established new Dorm Programs Coordinator positions
2. Expanded role of Activities Coordinator - expanded After School programming
3. Use of paraprofessionals to provide support during after school programs for students
4. Collaboration between programs at MSAD and MSAB
5. Use of information from Student Campus Climate surveys
6. Expanded weekend activities (ski club, etc)
7. Wilkins Hall (D) opened in 2018

Steering Committee feedback:

- Counseling services in the dorms
- Recreation staff meetings with students to plan out activities, with back up/alternative activities - teach students how to plan/strategize

Objective 2: Provide support to staff on increasing staff engagement with students and on motivating students to engage in Student Life programs and activities

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

1. Added Ski/Snowboard Club - January 2023
2. Expanded After School Program hours (2016)
3. Added STEM Activities (2021)
4. Added Academy Plus (A+) Program (2020)

5. **Increased opportunities for elementary sports**
6. **PD for dorm staff/attendance to national Student Life conferences (we also presented there) - next one is in June (Santa Fe)**

Steering Committee feedback:

- **B campus: yoga, bring in musicians, etc. (list more)**
- **B ASP added**
- **Add continued ECA/sports, clubs, etc offerings**
- **Make sure major activities happen between M-Th (to be equitable for students who leave on Fridays/arrive on Sun evenings)**

Needs:

- **MSAB dorm renovations**
- **Shifting needs compared to 20 years ago**
- **Dorm programs - honors, apartment living - to motivate students**

Instruction and Assessment

Strategic Goal: Goal: MSA is a place where students receive accessible, rigorous and standards-based education and related services with assessments that accurately reflect student growth.

5-Year Goal: MSA will create and implement a system that fosters collaboration and coordination between the two schools to ensure the provision of curriculum, instruction and assessment in alignment with our Guiding Beliefs.

Objective 1: Ensure accessibility

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

- 1. Accessibility training for administrators, administrative assistants, and others. (1c)**
- 2. School Accountability Committee examined/updated assessments used at MSA to ensure accessibility.**
- 3. Technology provided on both campuses to improve accessibility**
- 4. Created the tech coach ECA position to provide support and instruction on technology and accessibility. (1d)**
- 5. Changed MSAB daily announcements to make them more accessible.**
- 6. In the process of switching from Google to Microsoft 365 due to accessibility.**
- 7. Ongoing Assistive Technology committee to address student needs on both campuses**
- 8. 3rd Party Billing Funds - DeafBlind Kit**
- 9. Increased number of communication devices for students**
- 10. Alt-text provided on images/image descriptions on social media**
- 11. Board resolution**
- 12. logo/branding created with accessibility in mind**
- 13. Ground rules/guidelines for Zoom meetings**
- 14. Implemented in classroom materials (slides, etc)**
- 15. Videos captioned, voiced over and transcripts provided**
- 16. Assessments and curriculums - working on ensuring accessibility**
- 17. Audio descriptions, foreign language translations**

Objective 2: Provide appropriate assessments

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

- 1. Reviewed all state and district assessments given for validity and accessibility.**

2. Added additional district assessments (Gold's Assessment) to MSAD's ECE - K students. (2c)
3. Using Gold's Assessment to determine instruction and modifications, improvements on supporting families.
4. Developed a curriculum based assessment for MSAD K-5th grades.
5. Annual World's Best Workforce Report (2d)
6. Identified assessments for specific groups (LE, UE, etc)
7. Provide appropriate assessments/testing materials for our students (MNRL kits)
8. Ensure appropriate accommodations are documented in IEPs
9. VCSL and functional vision assessments, Woodcock-Johnsons, etc.

Steering Committee Feedback:

- Ensure our staff are appropriately trained/consider contracting out for testing on DeafBlind students (MSA staff and contractors are experienced in evaluations, and consider overall data, not just single test results)

Objective 3: Identify curriculum and resources

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

1. Developed a curriculum room to house all MSA approved curriculum and supplies (2020). With that addition came an increase to our library system Follet, all curriculum was labeled and inventoried in Follet. (3a)
2. Developed a curriculum cycle flowchart. (3b/3c)
3. Continually have students take PSEO classes through online and in person learning. (3d) - expanded to additional colleges/universities
4. With the release of Clerc Center ASL Standards, purchased new fingerspelling curriculum. (3h)
5. Started a committee to develop a grading policy
6. Added additional CTE/Art coursework. (3g)
7. In the process of applying to become an approved online school through MDE. (3f)
8. Digital platforms to support access to curriculum

Objective 4: Provide Professional Development

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

1. Developed a Professional Learning Community Schedule (PLC) for training licensed staff, paraprofessionals and residential educators.

2. Provided in-house training for licensed staff to meet their license requirements through PELSB.
3. Sent licensed staff to training off site (virtual/in person) to meet their license requirements through PELSB.
4. Spent time focusing on the newly added 'Cultural Competency' requirement through PELSB with a year long PLC commitment to understanding bias (2020-2021)
5. Sent staff to state-wide Communities of Practice meetings.
6. Bedrock Literacy
7. Bilingual Grammar Curriculum
8. Protactile training provided 1x
9. MDE led workshops/training

Steering Committee Feedback:

- AGD: look up data on all PLC trainings we provided over the past few years.

Objective 5: Provide technology for staff and students

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

1. New 1-1 devices purchased (iPads, Dell 2-1 devices, iPad Pro, laptops with additional ram/processing for screen readers)
2. Added webcams, hotspots, and other technology necessary for online learning during COVID
3. Updated wifi access points
4. Increased number of subscriptions
5. New Learning Management Systems (Schoology, Seesaw)
6. Infinitec Learning Platform
7. PowerSchool
8. Spedforms
9. Distance Learning push
10. One server for both campuses
11. Fiber optics
12. Microscopes
13. Robotics program
14. Switch/adaptive keyboards/mobile magnifiers/braille devices, Visio
15. Rear projector screens
16. Activ panels
17. Embosser, lifts for wheelchair users, 3D printers
18. New stages and related technology set-up

Steering Committee Feedback:

- Consider adding hotspot/wifi access in vehicles other than buses so students can do homework on long trips
- AGD to look up data re: technology purchases

Objective 6: Strengthen instruction

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

1. Yearly review of the World's Best Workforce
2. Changed the schedule from a six period day to a seven period day to allow students access to more electives.
3. Expanded MSAD's elementary literacy block.
4. Initiated fall/spring assessments by classroom teachers that are used to drive IEP goals.
5. Added a K-12 Art Teacher (MSAD).
6. Added a Robotics Program (MSAD).
7. RIT dual credit partnership
8. Continued support of ECC
9. Braille music, recording studio, new FACS room
10. Art classes
11. Bilingual seal from MDE

Steering Committee Feedback:

- Bring back drivers ed classes, auto/steel/wood shop classes (vocational program)
- Culinary classes, MS FACS, elementary, and self-contained classes
- Looking into expanding reading intervention program
- ASP - provide transportation afterwards to students

Statewide Visibility

Strategic Goal: MSA will be known by families and all school districts as a leader and partner in the education of students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, Blind or Visually Impaired for its campuses, as well as a resource center for information and outreach activities to support school districts and families statewide.

5-Year Goals:

4a: MSA will develop resources for school districts and families to support students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, Blind or Visually Impaired around the state.

4b: All school districts in Minnesota will recognize MSA as an educational option and include it in the IEP/placement discussions for students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, Blind or Visually Impaired.

Objective A1: Establish new and strengthen existing relationships and share information about available resource support with statewide stakeholders

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

- 1. Community forums**
- 2. Region 10 activities**
- 3. MDE advisory boards**
- 4. EHDI advisory board**
- 5. Attendance at MASA, MASE, MREA, Charting the C's, D/HH Collaborative Experience, and other statewide conferences**
- 6. Staff attendance of state-wide community of practice meetings**
- 7. Adding/continuing Family Immersion Weekend and PCI**
- 8. New Website (2019 and 2023)**
- 9. Attending booths and providing information**
- 10. Pathways to Life**
- 11. Sharing MNRL**
- 12. Prior to COVID, participated in Dakota County Public Library System ASL events**
- 13. Annual ESY programs**
- 14. Hired full-time Student Support Services Director**
- 15. Participated in Deaf/HH Family Camp**
- 16. Bilingual Seal (via MDE) to support non-MSAD students**

Objective A2: Offer professional development to meet region- or district-specific needs

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

1. Our staff presented at various conferences (i.e. Collaborative Experience, Language First)
2. Hope and Healing workshop - statewide
3. Handsland
4. NCLC (counselor conference)
5. ADARA participation by MSA staff (check)
6. Statewide ASL classes

Objective A3: Form a mobile assessment team to provide in-district evaluations

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

1. Hired an audiologist
2. Hired two ASL-proficient SLPs
3. Hired an ASL specialist
4. Provided ASL assessments upon request/Provided SLPI assessments for bilingual seals.
5. Provided assistance with evaluations upon request
6. OT hire
7. BVI and O&M services to districts
8. DHH contract services
9. Good relationship with Austin and Rochester school districts (consults with us)

Objective B1: Improve public relations and branding

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

1. New Logo for MSA/MSAB/MSAD
2. New Mascot for MSAB
3. New signs on I-35 (and in Faribault)
4. New websites (2018 and 2023)
5. Enhanced social media presence (especially with live streaming events on YouTube)
6. Banners on both campuses
7. Car decals
8. Reestablished YouTube channels
9. Promo video in works
10. KSMQ Off-90 feature on MSA
11. Social media video went viral

12. 4th music video
13. Increased visibility in mainstream/local news outlets
14. White Cane Day
15. Purple Rain event
16. U of M teacher prep committee, and other committees
17. Academic Bowl regional, GPSD, Deafopia, MADC/MRID conferences
18. Director of Community Engagement position filled.

SC Feedback:

- Motivational Interviewing Skills Days 1/mo with contracted clinician
- Motivational speaker at the beginning of each quarter/trimester

Objective B2: Host MSA-sponsored statewide and regional events for families and district stakeholders

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

1. Family Immersion Weekends (Spring 2018, Fall 2019, Fall 2022, and Spring 2023)
2. Parent-Child Institute (3/10/2018, 6/5/2020, 4/23/2022, 6/9/23)
3. ESY Summer Programs
4. Parent Meetings during Pathways to Life Program
5. Low Vision Clinic (10/12/2022)
6. Region 10 events
7. PTSA carnival
8. Desserts in the Dark, Family Game Nights, Trunk and Treat, Scarecrow Fest
9. Pancake breakfast
10. Transition fair

SC Feedback:

- Host events open to the public (i.e. spaghetti dinners)
- Participate in chili tasting contest/local events
- Clarify what we hosted vs when we sent MSA reps

Transition

Strategic Goal: The transition programs at MSA provide an array of quality programs and trainings that lead to independence in an ever-changing world.

5-Year Goal: The MSA transition program develops and supports transitional goals by providing student-centered programs, resources, courses, trainings, and work experiences that allow students to successfully transition to life after school.

Objective 1: Strengthen transition programs/resources

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

- 1. Strengthening the program through relationships with work sites, State Services for the Blind, Adjustment to Blindness training, Region 10, South Central, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services**
- 2. Connecting with our Alumni to come back and speak (give advice)**
- 3. Providing access for all areas of transition (recreation leisure/community participation/home living/employment/post secondary)**
- 4. Resources to Podcast, classes offered through SSB, webinars.**
- 5. Presented at Dignity to Work Forum through U of M (staff/student)**
- 6. Continuing with our in house work program sales to gain employability skills/money management and increase funds for our program.**
- 7. Participated in Region 10 Community of Practice group with Work Experience and Transition Coordinators for problem solving**
- 8. Established Academy Plus program at MSAD**
- 9. Discussions with Minnesota Department of Education about expanding BVI/Deaf and Hard of Hearing services beyond library resources**
- 10. Addition of Assistant Dorm Program Coordinators to both campuses**
- 11. Implemented many educational activities in dorm programs**
- 12. Exploration of student-centered IEP; met with Minnesota Department of Education and inter-agency staff on implementation process for MSA**
- 13. Initial survey distributed to MSAB college and Academy Plus students; other surveys were paused due to COVID-19**
- 14. Continued work in developing contacts and resources**
- 15. Discussions with Minnesota Department of Education about expanding BVI and Deaf/Hard of Hearing services beyond library resources**

16. Expansion of pilot programs: Academy Plus and Pathways to Life Summer Transition on the MSAD campus
17. Continuation of Pathways to Life summer transition program offered, converted to distance learning during COVID
18. Transition plans individualized and embedded into curriculum and classes for our students aged 14 - 21
19. Skills for success class
20. Community service graduation requirements
21. Transition specialist position established

SC Feedback:

- Expand Transition curriculum
- Increase college and career readiness IEP goals
- Have our students participate in summer youth/transition programs
- More visits to potential workplaces
- Consider organizing school graduation/pathways to support students in their transition.

Objective 2: Review/design courses

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

1. Robotics courses for MS and HS (Fall 2022)
2. Podcast class for students interested in Music and Technology.
3. Expanded Core Curriculum (goal setting, self-advocacy, employability skills, homeliving, leisure)
4. Utilizing the dorm as a stepping stone towards independence to set students up for success in the apartment/house.
5. Assistive Technology applications for phone (Pacer/Trails/SSB/field trips)
6. Attempted to set up College Buddies with Carleton
7. Transition plans individualized and included into classes for students aged 14-21 (MSAD)
8. Development of self-awareness/career interest inventory, transition-based skills checklists and processes
9. Continued annual review of current portfolio process for students
10. Development of self-awareness/career interest inventory, transition-based skills checklists and processes
11. Continued annual review of current portfolio process for students
12. Career awareness classes and activities for K-8 students
13. One student transitioned to full-time/full wage employment under MSA
14. Current student is working for full wages
15. 100% graduation rate

SC Feedback:

- **Students run their own IEP meetings/set up transition plan (when applicable)**
- **Start transition plan conversation in 9th grade**
- **Relationship with CVI**

Objective 3: Develop short term programs to support transition skills

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

1. **Established Pathways to Life Summer Transition Program at MSAD**
2. **MSAB relationships for short term programs provided onsite include: SEMCIL: home safety, TRAILS: assistive technology, MDI: Employability skills, CTIC: Work Skills Challenge and Parent forum.**
3. **MSAD relationships with MN Hands and Voices, SEMCIL, CTIC, Work Skills challenge, Minnesota Employment Center, Career Ventures Inc, ThinkSelf**
4. **Expansion of pilot programs: Academy Plus and Pathways to Life Summer Transition on the MSAD campus**
5. **Continuation of Pathways to Life summer transition program offered, converted to distance learning during COVID**
6. **Continued refining of Academy Plus program on MSAB campus**
7. **CVI (Career Ventures Inc) dorm/school**
8. **Drivers ed**
9. **Expanded age limit for PTL**

Objective 4: Provide training

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

1. **Career/College Fairs - hosted in Spring**
2. **Field Trips - local community, MNCDHH, Vocational Rehabilitation Office**
3. **Tours-for Adjustment to Blindness training facilities, job sites, colleges, and Day programs for adults (community enrichment, recreation leisure, art/theater interests)**
4. **Job Shadows and Interviews**
5. **Attend College and Career Fairs**
6. **Customized training-person centered thinking**
7. **Improved Taskboxes Training Center for job specific skills.**
8. **Addition of new Assistant Dorm Program Coordinators on both campuses, which helped implement many educational activities within the dorms**
9. **Exploration of student-centered IEP; met with Minnesota Department of Education and inter-agency staff on implementation process for**

MSA

10. Job coach training

11. School counselor helping students with filling out applications

12. New scholarships added for students

SC Feedback:

- **Increase work with students on course selections/field of study**
- **Continue to seek out new scholarships**

Objective 5: Expand work experience

Actions/accomplishments since 2018:

- 1. Increased work placement sites at MSA and in the Faribault community**
- 2. Added new work experience sites within the community, with 3 having the option for the MSAB student to be hired on.**
- 3. Reaching out to employers for virtual job opportunities (to give the students the option to continue working with the same employer once they leave Faribault).**
- 4. Improved on- and off-campus work experience opportunity collaboration between MSAD and MSAB campuses**
- 5. Many students placed into work experience opportunities on and off campuses**
- 6. Strengthened relationship with Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and State Services for the Blind**
- 7. Continued annual review of current portfolio process for students**
- 8. More on-campus opportunities for students to get work experience**

SC Feedback:

- **Include list of work placement sites (show range)**
- **FYI: Disability Hub MN is a possible resource**
- **Tips from MHT on how to support students over the years**
- **Encourage students to open cases with VR - Pre-ETS**
- **Invite members from diverse communities to speak to students about their careers/field of work**

Overall feedback:

- Define the impact on our students from our efforts (impact assessment)
- Avoid acronyms (or spell fully, include description)
- Track usage of our software programs
- More isn't always better - ensure no duplicates, ensure we are getting value for our money
- Look at incorporating incentive system for students (i.e - international trip)
- Trial work placement for students



Achieve Care Thrive

**Minnesota State Academies
Strategic Plan for 2018-2023**

Table of Contents

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Vision, Mission, Guiding Beliefs
- ❖ Strategic Goals, 5-Year Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps
- ❖ Communication Plan
- ❖ Appendices
 - Strategic Plan Development Process
 - SWOT Analysis
 - Acknowledgements

Introduction

The Minnesota State Academies (MSA) include the Minnesota School for the Blind (MSAB), the Minnesota School for the Deaf (MSAD), and statewide services. Established in 1858 as an agency, MSA is the leader in the State of Minnesota in providing services to students who are Blind, Visually Impaired, Deaf, Hard of Hearing or DeafBlind and their families. As part of this strategic plan, we aspire to providing greater levels of service and support for students and families throughout the state of Minnesota.

The MSA 2018-2023 Strategic Plan articulates the schools' and agency's goals for the next 5 years. The mission, vision and guiding beliefs, which were meticulously reviewed and revised as part of the strategic planning process, reflect the values of MSA and provide the foundation for all decisions, actions and activities to be taken during the life of this plan.

Dedicated staff, empowered students, involved parents, supportive alumni and invested stakeholders are committed to working together to accomplish the strategic goals. They will continue to enhance MSA as the foremost resource in the state and region for Deaf, Blind, and DeafBlind education.

Vision, Mission, Guiding Beliefs

Vision

MSA empowers every student to achieve, care, and thrive in an ever-changing world.

Mission

MSA provides a rigorous, student-centered educational program in a fully accessible, language-rich environment to maximize each student's full potential. Additionally, MSA provides statewide resources and professional expertise to parents, families, partners, and educational programs in Minnesota.

Guiding Beliefs

MSA Believes:

- Families are valued partners in fostering the development of each student's full potential.
- Students are the primary focus of all decisions and they will have opportunities to participate in decision-making.
- Students thrive by becoming independent, active, lifelong learners to the greatest extent possible.
- Students' development of understanding, appreciation, and respect for individual and cultural diversity is valued.
- Students require an accessible language and communication-rich environment so continuous opportunities for planned and incidental learning can occur in and outside the classroom.
- Students require ongoing opportunities to directly interact with a variety of peers and role models to develop positive self-identity, as well as social-emotional and advocacy skills.
- Students gain valuable life skills and benefit from other learning opportunities in a safe, caring, supportive, and accessible environment during school, after school (Student Life*), and community-based activities.
- Students must be given the tools necessary to locate, access, and use resources/supports within their school and community.
- Students prepare for a successful transition to education, work, and citizenship after graduation through an array of quality programs, services, and the use of state-of-the-art technology.
- Students achieve communication competency and gain access to the world by maximizing their use of assistive technology.

- All staff members need to have high expectations for all students, so that students can develop high expectations for themselves.
- All instructional and residential staff members are responsible to provide appropriate resources, universal design for learning, and differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students.
- All staff members require ongoing quality professional development and support to optimize their ability to meet the needs of students.
- All staff members are responsible for contributing to the achievement of the school's vision, mission, and guiding beliefs.
- All MSA community members thrive with effective communication and collaboration.
- MSA is a valued resource for information and outreach activities to support students, parents, families, and school districts statewide.

For Our Blind, Visually Impaired, and Deafblind students, MSA Believes:

- The Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC)* is foundational to the instructional program and provides a pathway to independence.
- Instruction in Braille and the use of Braille throughout the student's educational program, as appropriate to the strengths and needs of the student, is vital for maximizing students' literacy and academic development.
- Accessible Educational Materials (AEM: Braille, large print, audio, digital) are vital for maximizing every student's academic, cognitive, social-emotional, and self-identity potential.
- Orientation and Mobility (O&M) skills are vital for students to know where they are and how to safely navigate their world.

For Our Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind students, MSA Believes:

- Having a cultural and linguistic perspective of Deaf/Hard of Hearing/DeafBlind people is a core value.
- A comprehensive, bilingual (American Sign Language & English) education that results in proficiency in both languages is vital for maximizing every student's academic, cognitive, social-emotional, and self-identity potential.
- Providing auditory, spoken, and tactile language services, as appropriate to the strengths and needs of the student, is an important component of our bilingual instructional program.
- Ongoing direct communication using American Sign Language with peers and staff is a foundational aspect of our program.

Strategic Goals, 5-Year Goals, Objectives, Action Steps

Goal Area #1: School Climate

Strategic Goal:

Minnesota State Academies (MSA) is a place where all are welcomed, informed, involved and safe.

5-Year Goal:

Minnesota State Academies (MSA) will create and implement systems for timely, consistent and effective internal and external communications, student support and professional development.

Objective 1:

Establish mechanisms for improving internal communication

1a: Create teaming opportunities—e.g., dorm/school, aides/teachers, MSAB/MSAD, and within departments

- Identify potential teams and prioritize most needed teaming opportunities
- Create a protocol for teams, to include identifying purpose, participants, schedule, agenda, facilitation, note taking and dissemination
- Implement

1b: Increase communication from administration to staff

- Review and get feedback from staff on existing communication activities
- Develop new methods for information sharing with feedback component and revise as needed

1c: Develop staff survey

- Design and administer survey and analyze results related to issues of importance to staff; e.g., employment conditions; supervisory support; effectiveness of communication from administration, among staff, with families; morale; safety

1d: Increase communication from administration to students

- Review and get feedback from students on existing communication activities
- Develop new methods for information sharing with feedback component and revise as needed

1e: Develop student survey

- Design and administer survey and analyze results related to issues of importance to students; e.g., effectiveness of communication from administration, from staff, safety, behavior, health, academic rigor, social opportunities, cultural diversity, critical mass

Objective 2:

Establish mechanisms for improving external communication with parents/families

2a: Increase communication from MSA to parents/families

- Review and get feedback from parents on quality and frequency of existing communication from administration, teachers, dorm staff, athletic staff
- Review and get feedback from parents on quality and frequency of existing communication methods; e.g., newsletters, website, email, classroom letters, social media
- Develop new or revise existing methods for information sharing with feedback component; make modifications as needed

2b: Increase parent to parent communication

- Explore developing a student/parent directory
- Create more social opportunities/events for parents/families to connect

2c: Increase parent/family engagement

- Offer opportunities for virtual participation
- Collect data on parent/family engagement during 2018-19 School Year

Objective 3:

Establish mechanisms for improving external communications with partners/stakeholders

3a: Increase communication from MSA to external partners/stakeholders

- Identify current and potential partners/stakeholders
- Review and get feedback from partners/stakeholders on existing communication activities; e.g., website, social media, newspapers, annual reports, town hall meetings
- Develop new methods for information sharing with feedback component and revise as needed

3b: Increase collaborative activities with agencies/stakeholders

- Identify current collaborative activities with partners/stakeholders
- Review and get feedback from partners/stakeholders on existing collaborative activities
- Develop new opportunities for collaborative activities with feedback component and revise as needed

Objective 4:

Establish mechanisms for ensuring student and staff safety and a positive working/learning environment

4a: Create clear and consistent expectations

- Review staff handbook(s) for clarity and comprehensiveness of expectations; e.g., professional behavior, dress code, boundaries with students, confidentiality, attendance; revise as needed; share with staff
- Review student handbook for clarity and comprehensiveness of expectations; e.g., behavior, attendance, harassment

4b: Review student safety

- Investigate, identify and prioritize issues related to student safety; e.g., bullying; cyber bullying; marginalization based on disability, race, status, other protected areas; need for support groups; use of drugs and alcohol

- Develop action plans for prioritized issues, including data component
 - Implement
- 4c: Review crisis prevention plans and response
- Review current crisis protocols, to include: technology infrastructure; defining of staff roles; practice schedules; communication with parents/others during/after event; post crisis debrief/evaluation
 - Revise protocols as needed
 - Develop plan for securing infrastructure upgrades as identified
- 4d: Explore Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) or other school-wide behavioral support programs

Objective 5:

Establish mechanisms for providing professional development for all staff

- 5a: Provide training
- Review strategic plan and school improvement plan to determine training priorities
 - Survey staff to determine needs
 - Develop training plan aligned to priorities
 - Implement
- 5b: Provide ongoing support
- Create ongoing support plan for reinforcing training provided
- 5c: Develop tracking system for professional development (individual and school-wide)

Goal Area #2: Student Life

Strategic Goal:

The Student Life program supports and develops educational goals by providing student-centered programs, activities and social opportunities that allow all day and residential students to discover self-identity and enrich their lives now and in the future.

5 Year Goal:

Student Life will provide an increasing array of quality programs and activities, facilitated by appropriately trained staff that result in higher student engagement and maximize services and resources between both campuses.

Objective 1:

Establish a mechanism for improving the quality of Student Life activities, the level of student engagement in planning and participation, and the most effective use of resources

1a: Determine best method for improving student engagement

- Investigate existing committees or groups that could focus on improving student engagement (e.g., site council, Student Body Government, Student Council) and identify most appropriate avenues for gathering input/fostering engagement.
- Assign committee or group the responsibility for carrying out activities in 1b

1b: Develop, disseminate and analyze survey:

- Develop audience-friendly survey questions for students, staff and parents to give feedback on current activities and programs and suggestions for revised or new activities and programs
- Create survey
- Determine strategies to maximize responses and timelines for survey completion
- Distribute and collect surveys
- Analyze survey data
- Determine next steps

1c: Review individual and shared resources at MSAB and MSAD, and determine opportunities for collaborating on student-centered activities/programs.

- Identify modifications/accommodations to allow all students to participate
- Identify preparation needed for staff and students to ensure activities and interactions are effective and positive
- Plan ongoing evaluation of joint programs and activities to determine needed adjustments

1d: Explore opportunities to include community resources and activities as part of the Student Life program

Objective 2:

Provide support to staff on increasing staff engagement with students and on motivating students to engage in Student Life programs and activities

2a: Provide staff/professional development on topics such as:

- Awareness & understanding of legal obligations (e.g., accessibility, IEP) and documentation
- Universal Design for planning activities
- Addressing cultural needs of students in a responsive and effective manner
- Supporting the health of our students (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual, etc.)
- Awareness and understanding of student development, and the effective and appropriate management of student discipline, behavior and motivation
- Effectiveness of school-home communication including but not limited to family awareness of Student Life opportunities and their children's level of engagement in activities
- Monitoring and motivating student engagement

Goal Area #3: Instruction and Assessment

Strategic Goal:

MSA is a place where students receive accessible, rigorous and standards-based education and related services with assessments that accurately reflect student growth.

5-Year Goal:

MSA will create and implement a system that fosters collaboration and coordination between the two schools to ensure the provision of curriculum, instruction and assessment in alignment with our Guiding Beliefs.

Objective 1:

Ensure accessibility

- 1a: Identify and prioritize need areas (e.g., materials, environment, communication, testing)
- 1b: Develop plan to meet prioritized needs
- 1c: Purchase accessible equipment and materials and provide professional development to staff and students

Objective 2:

Provide appropriate assessments

- 2a: Inventory existing assessments
- 2b: Identify and purchase appropriate assessments
- 2c: Accurately assess all students with valid tools
- 2d: Measure student growth
- 2e: Share individual data with students and families and aggregate data with appropriate stakeholders
- 2f: Examine assessment data to guide instruction

Objective 3:

Identify curriculum and resources

- 3a: Inventory existing curriculum resources
- 3b: Expand the variety of resources and increase the capacity to meet all student needs
- 3c: Examine/revise existing curriculum cycle to include each subject area, electives, and address needs of students with additional needs as well as new courses in the future. During the review process include review of cultural diversity, accessibility, equity, and validity
- 3d: Increase opportunities for Advanced Placement (AP) and Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) courses, including online courses offered through universities
- 3e: Review Expanded Core Curriculum and develop implementation approaches

Objective 4:

Provide Professional Development

4a: Consistently use staff performance evaluation measures, surveys and state/national trends to determine professional development areas

4b: Strengthen the mentoring program for new staff

4c: Provide professional development around teaming and educational responsibilities

4d: Provide professional development in the area of interpreting assessment data to drive quality instruction

Objective 5:

Provide technology for staff and students

5a: Inventory existing devices and software

5b: Provide staff training on existing technology and devices

5c: Review and determine future technology needs (purchasing cycle)

5d: Expand technology curriculum to include applicable apps, programs and digital learning platforms

5e: Develop a process for determining the need for and use of assistive technology

Objective 6:

Strengthen instruction

6a: Ensure coordination of instructional opportunities between both campuses for all students

6b: Create a course catalogue including course description, prerequisites, location

6c: Raise staff expectations for academic rigor appropriate to each student, including up to or exceeding grade level

6d: Provide appropriate test preparation through teaching test-taking strategies and practice opportunities

6e: Increase distance learning opportunities and services for both MSA and non-MSA students

Goal Area 4: Statewide Visibility

Strategic Goal:

MSA will be known by families and all school districts as a leader and partner in the education of students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, Blind or Visually Impaired for its campuses, as well as a resource center for information and outreach activities to support school districts and families statewide.

5-Year Goal: (2 goals – 4A and 4B)

Goal 4A:

MSA will develop resources for school districts and families to support students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, Blind or Visually Impaired around the state.

Objective 1:

Establish new and strengthen existing relationships and share information about available resource support with statewide stakeholders

1a: Identify opportunities to attend statewide and regional professional and family-focused meetings and events; i.e., Low Incidence Leadership Forum, Directors Forum, Hands and Voices, advisory councils

1b: Create a plan for attendance (who will go to which

events/meetings/activities)

1c: Actively share information about MSA

1d: Establish a process for data collection regarding contacts, presentations, inquiries

1e: Increase collaboration with teacher training programs and offering practicum opportunities

1f: Increase attendance and/or presentations at conferences

- Develop topics and identify staff who can present
- Collect contact information from participants for follow up

Objective 2:

Offer professional development to meet region- or district-specific needs

2a: Collaborate with school districts to identify needs

2b: Develop an interpreter evaluation procedure and mentoring program and pilot it with volunteer districts

2c: Develop on-line trainings and supports based on district-identified priorities

2d: Host statewide training and/or webinars on low incidence topics

2e: Open MSA trainings/information events to non-MSA students and educators

Objective 3:

Form a mobile assessment team to provide in-district evaluations

- 3a: Establish pilot team
- 3b: Develop a process for service provision
- 3c: Conduct 3-5 evaluations
- 3d: Collect feedback from districts receiving the service, share results, and determine statewide need
- 3e: Request resources to establish ongoing mobile team

Goal 4B:

All school districts in Minnesota will recognize MSA as an educational option and include it in the IEP/placement discussions for students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, Blind or Visually Impaired.

Objective 1:

Improve public relations and branding

- 1a: Revise/redesign/update all aspects of the MSA website to include MSAB, MSAD and statewide events and resources
- 1b: Review/redesign/update MSA publications; e.g., The Companion, MSA pamphlets, newsletters, white papers, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), World's Best Workforce, MSA Annual Report
- 1c: Review current use of social media; revise and update as appropriate
- 1d: Develop logo(s) & branding strategies, exhibit booth displays, campus banners, freeway signs

Objective 2:

Host MSA -sponsored statewide and regional events for families and district stakeholders

- 2a: List and analyze benefit of established programs
- 2b: Create more opportunities to bring students, families and district staff to campus
- 2c: Share information about MSA events and resources (open house, social events, short-term programs, town hall meetings) with district staff and non-MSA families
- 2d: Host MSA-sponsored activities and events in various regions of the state
- 2e: Conduct events and collect feedback from participants regarding value/benefit for future planning

Goal Area #5: Transition

Strategic Goal:

The transition programs at MSA provide an array of quality programs and trainings that lead to independence in an ever-changing world.

5-Year Goal:

The MSA transition program develops and supports transitional goals by providing student-centered programs, resources, courses, trainings, and work experiences that allow students to successfully transition to life after school.

Objective 1:

Strengthen transition programs/resources

1a: Create an inventory of existing programs, resources, and curriculum

1b: Develop, disseminate and analyze survey:

- Develop audience-friendly survey questions for students, staff and parents (including parents of recent graduates) to obtain feedback on current activities and programs, and suggestions for revised or new activities and programs
- Create survey
- Determine strategies to maximize responses and timelines for survey completion
- Distribute and collect surveys
- Analyze survey data; determine next steps

1c: Create a survey for graduates related to their preparation for life after high school and their current school or work status (1, 3, 5 years)

1d: Locate resources/partners/organizations to increase MSA's transition program capacity

1e: Provide opportunities for transition staff to tour and/or contact other transition programs to gain ideas and establish a support network (in state programs, schools for the deaf or blind)

1f: Develop information about the MSA transition program and distribute statewide

1g: Evaluate current practices regarding individualized transition program development for students; revise process as needed.

Objective 2:

Review/design courses

2a: Inventory existing courses

2b: Develop/expand transition courses based on survey, needs

- Vocational/Career & Technical Education (CTE)
- Work
- College
- Independent Living/Assisted Living

- 2c: Develop or find a self-awareness/career interest inventory; implement process for students to complete and utilize results
- 2d: Develop or find a transition-based skills checklist; implement process for students to complete and utilize results
- 2e: Strengthen current portfolio process for students to collect and use all transition materials and resources
- 2f: Develop early career-awareness (K-8) class activities

Objective 3:

Develop short term programs to support transition skills

- 3a: Identify potential short term transition programs
- 3b: Establish, revise, and/or expand summer transition programs
- 3c: Establish, revise, and/or expand school year short term transition programs
- 3d: Develop information-sharing materials re: short term programs and distribute statewide

Objective 4:

Provide training

- 4a: Identify existing training needs.
- 4b: Determine and define the roles of school and dorm staff in the transition programs
- 4c: Expand the participation for both school and dorm staff in the planning and implementation of the IEP transition plan
- 4d: Establish comprehensive 14-21 training plan for school/dorm staff
- 4e: Implement a student-driven IEP process in which students lead their own meeting as appropriate; design and implement training for staff and students

Objective 5:

Expand work experience

- 5a: Identify existing and expand on and off campus work experience options/partners (work sites, job shadowing, volunteer opportunities, apprenticeships)
- 5b: Collaborate with State Services for the Blind (SSB) and Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and other stakeholders to identify work placements in students' home communities
- 5c: Create on-campus summer work opportunities for students
- 5d: Identify a work readiness checklist for use in preparing and evaluating students on the job
- 5e: Prepare students for employment; e.g., developing a resume, filling out an application, interviewing, daily work behaviors

Communication Plan

Mission and Purpose of the Communication Plan

The purpose of the Minnesota State Academies (MSA) communication plan is to identify and effectively engage with MSA's diverse stakeholders. The plan provides a roadmap for sharing the MSA strategic plan with staff, families, students, and local and state stakeholders. It seeks to inform and build the collective commitment of the MSA community.

Practice-Policy Communication Cycles

The Board, Superintendent, Instructional Leadership Team, and Steering Committee are responsible for the overall implementation of and communication about the strategic plan.

Stakeholder Group: Students

Methods of Communication: Friday Forums (D); Student Council (B)/SBG (D); Assemblies (B); Trojan Forum (D); The Companion; Daily announcements; Facebook; Superintendent videos

Frequency of Communication: Introductory kickoff assembly; Quarterly (The Companion); Monthly (Special short updates; Superintendent Videos)

Stakeholder Group: Parents and Families

Methods of Communication: Email/Letters; The Companion; MSA website; Annual report; Facebook; Superintendent Videos; Parent events; Open House

Frequency of Communication: Yearly (annual report); Quarterly (The Companion); Monthly (Special mailings with short updates; Superintendent Videos)

Stakeholder Group: Staff

Methods of Communication: All-staff meetings; Instructional staff meetings; Dorm staff meetings; Start-of-school-year meeting; Email; Superintendent videos; Daily announcements; Annual report; The Companion; Site Council; Department Team meetings; Facebook; Website

Frequency of Communication: Yearly (annual report); Quarterly (The Companion); Monthly (Special mailings with short updates; Superintendent Videos); Daily/Weekly (announcements, various meetings)

Stakeholder Group: Board

Methods of Communication: Middle and end of year reports; Superintendent reports during board meetings; Superintendent Videos; The Companion; Email; Facebook; Website

Frequency of Communication: June and December (Middle and annual report); Quarterly (The Companion); Monthly (Special mailings with short updates; Superintendent Videos)

Stakeholder Group: Alumni

Methods of Communication: Maroon and Gold (D); Alumni meetings; Alumni officer meetings (B); Updates at summer reunions; Town hall meetings; Monthly phone calls (B); Superintendent videos; The Companion; Facebook; Website; Annual Report

Frequency of Communication: Yearly (annual report); Quarterly (The Companion); Monthly (Special mailings with short updates; Superintendent Videos); Daily/Weekly (email, various meetings)

Stakeholder Group: Department Heads

Methods of Communication: Instructional Leadership Team/Department Heads meetings; Email; Superintendent Videos; Daily announcements; Annual report; Facebook; The Companion; Website

Frequency of Communication: Yearly (annual report); Quarterly (The Companion); Monthly (Special mailings with short updates; Superintendent Videos); Daily/Weekly (announcements, various meetings)

Stakeholder Group: Site Council

Methods of Communication: Monthly meetings; Email; Facebook; Superintendent Videos; Daily announcements; Annual report; The Companion; Website

Frequency of Communication: Yearly (annual report); Quarterly (The Companion); Monthly (Site Council meetings, special mailings with short updates; Superintendent Videos); Daily/Weekly (announcements, various meetings)

Stakeholder Group: Agencies-Organizations

(i.e. State Services for the Blind (SSB); Vocational Rehabilitation (VR); Minnesota Commission for the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing (MNCDHH); Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Services (DHHS); DeafBlind services (DB); Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB); Blind Inc.; Minnesota Association of Deaf Citizens (MADC); Vision Loss Resources; Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA); Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE); National Federation of the Blind (NFB); Duluth Lighthouse for the Blind; Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA); Minnesota Rural Education Association (MREA); American Council for the Blind (ACB); Minnesota chapter of National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (MNAPVI); Hands and Voices, Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights (PACER); Multi-Disabilities and Visual Impairment Services (MDVI); Family Mentor Program)

Methods of Communication: Email; Annual report; Website; Facebook; The Companion; Superintendent Videos; LISTSERVs

Frequency of Communication: Yearly (annual report); Quarterly (The Companion); Monthly (special mailings with short updates; Superintendent Videos)

Stakeholder Group: Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)
(Advisory Councils; DeafBlind Project; Regional Low Incidence Facilitators;
Blind/Visually Impaired Specialist; Deaf/Hard of Hearing Specialist; Help Me
Grow program; Low Incidence Leadership Forum; Institute of Higher Education
Forum; Summer Transition Program)

Methods of Communication: Updates at advisory council meetings (get on
agenda); The Companion; Email; Annual report; Website; Facebook;
Superintendent videos; LISTSERVs

Frequency of Communication: Yearly (annual report); Quarterly (The
Companion); Monthly (special mailings with short updates; Superintendent
Videos); Various (advisory council meetings)

Stakeholder Group: Community and General Public
(I.e. Lions Club; Sertoma Club; Work Experience Partners)

Methods of Communication: Email; Annual report; The Companion; Website;
Facebook; Presentations

Frequency of Communication: Yearly (annual report); Quarterly (The
Companion); Various depending on partner

Stakeholder Group: School Districts (Special Education Directors)

Methods of Communication: Email; Annual report; The Companion; Website;
Facebook; Superintendent Videos; LISTSERVs

Frequency of Communication: Yearly (annual report); Quarterly (The
Companion); Monthly (Director Forum meetings, special mailings with short
updates; Superintendent Videos)

Stakeholder Group: Governor's Office and Legislature

Methods of Communication: Annual report; The Companion; Website

Frequency of Communication: Yearly (annual report); Quarterly (The
Companion); Various as needed

Stakeholder Group: Advisory Boards/Councils

Methods of Communication: Updates/presentations during meetings; Annual
report; The Companion; Website; Facebook

Frequency of Communication: Yearly (annual report); Quarterly (The
Companion); Various (advisory council meetings)

Appendix—1:

Strategic Plan Development Process

In July 2017, the MSA Board included a presentation on strategic planning as part of its annual retreat. The Board decided to enter into a strategic planning process beginning spring 2018, which led to the development of a 5-year plan for MSAB, MSAD and expansion of statewide visibility and services.

The strategic planning process, which was facilitated by Jane Mulholland and Ron Stern of Planning for Student Success, began with two days of stakeholder meetings at MSAB and MSAD during which participants identified current strengths and areas for improvement. Stakeholders included: students, staff, parents, alumni, Site Council members, the MSA Board, and community.

The MSA Strategic Planning Steering Committee, made up of students, parents, staff, administrators and Board members, met for a total of 6 days over several months. It was tasked with the following responsibilities:

- Review/revise MSA’s vision, mission, and guiding beliefs
- Review stakeholder meeting comments
- Identify strategic goal areas
- Conduct a Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) analysis
- Develop strategic goals, 5-year goals, objectives, and action steps
- Design a communication plan

Accountability for implementing the strategic plan is ensured in two ways. Administrators are assigned to lead and be responsible for the completion of each of the 5 strategic goals. In addition, a communication plan, which addresses all internal and external stakeholders, outlines the method(s) and frequency of communication and the responsible party. The communication plan includes biannual progress reports to the MSA Board, and annual reports to the Office of the Governor and the Minnesota State Legislature.

Accreditation is a foundational aspect of the educational programs offered at MSA. MSAB is currently accredited, and MSAD will complete the process by the end of this 5-year strategic plan. During years 4 and 5, the self-studies required for AdvancED and CEASD accreditation will be compiled, with the site visits occurring before the end of SY 22-23. The resulting school improvement plan and the subsequent 5-year strategic plan will be aligned, providing a clear pathway to the future.

Appendix—2: SWOT Analysis Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

The MSA Strategic Planning Steering Committee conducted a Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. The committee identified strengths and areas for improvement for each of the 5 strategic goal areas: School Climate, Student Life, Instruction and Assessment, Statewide Visibility and Transition. It then considered opportunities and potential or existing threats facing MSA in the next five years.

Strengths and Areas for Improvement

School Climate

Strengths:

- Relationship between students and instructional staff
- K-12 students' familiarity with and acceptance of one another
- Staff willingness to step up as needed
- Improving website and social media and their accessibility for all
- New position of Communications Director and its role to bring increased MSA visibility
- Daily staff newsletter
- Monthly family newsletters
- Communication with families of children ECE through 5th grade
- Daily/weekly communication logs in MSAB's MCC program
- Accessible, favorable school environment (as expressed by MSAB students)

Areas for Improvement:

- Consistent, accurate and timely communication between school (including Student Life) and parents (as expressed by parents)
- Consistent communication between the instructional departments and dorms
- Clear, identified points of contact at the school for MS/HS parents
- Staff morale
- Consistent, across-the-board, positive work attitude
- Meaningful expression of appreciation for and recognition of employees and their accomplishments
- Equitable assumption/assignment of employee tasks and responsibilities
- Clear, effective and consistent avenues for staff expression of ideas, issues and concerns
- Clear, effective and consistent communication between teachers and SEPAS
- Greater caring and commitment among MSAD students about their education
- Academic rigor
- Clear understanding and consistent, effective application of attendance and student behavior policies
- Effective, consistent communication about positive developments at MSA with external stakeholders in the state
- Sometimes staff other than the classroom teacher communicates with parents about their child and may give inaccurate or incomplete information.

Student Life

Strengths:

- Array and quality of age-appropriate after school programs and activities (including athletics)
- Involvement of family/alumni with after school and athletic activities
- Reasonable activity fees
- School pride
- Staff-to-student dorm ratios
- Relationship with local business community leading to opportunities for student work experience
- Student involvement in activities
- New, state-of-the-art dorm at MSAD
- Parent input is welcome
- A+ House – a semi independent living/learning program at MSAB

- Student opportunities for travel in and out of state for various competitions and activities

Areas for Improvement:

- Quality, adequacy and variation of food served at school (expressed by students)
- Opportunities for MSAB's MCC students to interact outside of classroom with peers who are language models
- Greater opportunities for widespread student participation in activities such as drama
- Available gym/activity space especially during winter
- Balance between supervision and student independence
- Greater, more effective and consistent staff interaction with students
- Training for dorm staff on providing effective after-school academic support to diverse students
- Consistency of parental expectations relating to student independence and discipline at school (including dorms)
- Opportunities for dorm staff to participate in school-provided in-service with instructional staff
- Opportunities for appropriate dorm staff participation in the IEP process and meetings

Instruction & Assessment

Strengths:

- Caring teachers are committed to students and their outcomes
- Assessment/evaluation team
- Improving curriculum compliance with state standards
- Licensure and qualification of DHH teachers, support staff and other staff
- Most MSAB teachers licensed in B/VI
- Adherence to state testing requirements
- Completion of ASL receptive testing component with current MSAD students
- Professional development training for SEPAs this year
- Professional Development training for teachers
- Delivery of an array of services at MSAB (i.e., OT/music/pool)
- Health clinic
- Direct communication with peers and staff for students
- Communication-accessible environment throughout the school day and after school on campus
- Braille knowledge among staff at MSAB
- Incidental learning opportunities

- Availability of technology devices for the individual student
- Student-teacher ratio in the classroom
- Use of formal and informal assessments
- Flexible group scheduling
- Use of ActivPanels in the classrooms
- Support for students to attend public schools as appropriate
- Interpreting services
- Curriculum development opportunities during the summer for staff

Areas for Improvement:

- Accessibility of statewide assessments and NWEA for students
- Training on use of devices/technology to support student learning
- Resources/capacity to provide services for specialized student needs
- Coordination of services between both campuses
- Coordination of services for Deafblind students
- Provision of Vocational/CTE courses
- Curriculum for MCC students
- Availability of elective courses (impacted by low number of students)
- Relevance of state reports on actual school performance – in turn affects accurate perception of the schools
- Academic rigor of classes as perceived by students and parents
- Appropriate, relevant assessments for all students (especially for academically challenged students)
- Consistent staff performance evaluations
- Opportunities for staff/teachers to meet to bring on multi-disciplinary approach to working with students
- Mentoring program for new staff
- Language arts curriculum
- Collaboration between teachers; across the board integration of language arts instruction in the classroom
- Consistent communication, consequences and support for students on Academic Probation (AP)

Statewide Visibility

Strengths:

- Minnesota Resource Libraries
- Relationship with Minnesota Department of Education (MDE); Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) and Blind/Visually Impaired (BVI) advisory boards
- Summer school programs

- Relationship with State services for the Blind (SSB)/Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)/Region 10
- Capacity to serve students
- Facilities to host local and statewide events and trainings
- 150+ years of service to students and families
- Increasing visibility with legislators
- Support for MSAD from the Commission for the Deaf
- Relationship with Faribault public schools/Shattuck-St. Mary's School
- Relationships between MSAB and the National Federation of the Blind, American Council of the Blind, and the American Printing House for the Blind
- Parent Child Institute
- Family Immersion Weekend

Areas for Improvement:

- Messaging about the two schools
- School districts' awareness of MSA programs, services and facilities
- Local, regional and statewide awareness/understanding of MSA
- Partnerships with districts, organizations, and agencies
- Greater provision of programs/services
- Capacity to provide outreach/short-term programs
- Consideration of MSA as a first-stop school placement for families
- Updated informational/public relations materials
- Clear and shared budget line items
- Consistent relationships with Special Ed directors and other external stakeholders in the state
- Capacity to follow through on ideas and strategies

Transition

Strengths:

- Transition Programs at MSAB: Academy Plus and 14-18
- Relationship between MSAB and State Services for the Blind (SSB) (transition workshops)
- Hosting job/resource fairs
- Relationships with Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
- Career exploration course for juniors
- Assessment tools and evaluation team
- Number of graduates that go on to college or training program after high school
- Involvement of family/alumni with after school and athletic activities

- Availability and student use of Post-Secondary Educational Options (PSEO)

Areas for Improvement:

- Independent living skills programming at MSAD
- Clarity of parental understanding of transition programming and requirements at MSAB
- K-12 staff knowledge of entire transition process
- Pathway options for students (e.g., for college, work)
- Variety of vocational/CTE classes
- Availability of Advanced Placement classes
- Collaboration and communication between the instructional division and dorm
- Five-year tracking of graduates and their outcomes
- Work study on campus and off-campus, internships and community service opportunities and requirements
- Onset of career planning
- Staffing for transition programming
- Identification and monitoring of the different components of transition programming

Opportunities for MSA

- Family Immersion Weekend – resulted in 3 family tours; increase these activities
- Expand our summer program offerings (i.e., camps) for specific groups (both D and B) – themed camps
- Satellite programs (if funded) – MSA could support kids across the state
- 18-21 program (MSAD) opening this fall
- Pair up MCC and other students with typical peers in the community
- Dormitory space—have room to grow
- More after-school programs (music/art/dancing)
- Offer opportunity for the community to use the gym, auditorium, other campus spaces
- Open ASP to community students
- Share resources between MSAB and MSAD campuses
- Strengthen relationship with local and statewide legislators
- MSAB – artist in residence program is wonderful—consider establishing at MSAD
- Connect with school districts serving D, HH, B, VI or DB students to help them better understand what MSAB and MSAD offer

- Establish an ASL club after school for non-MSAD students
- Provide school district training on how to work with deaf or blind child
- Offer free/reduced evaluation for families (invite them to stay overnight on campus) – get them to visit and see the program for themselves
- Design and offer distance-learning opportunities.
- Make MSAD the first stop (at birth)
- Develop a deaf mentor program
- Expand/maintain White Cane Day – creates a lot of exposure – brings in non-locals
- Consider diversity-specific programs (Somali, Latinx); utilize MSA’s mental health team to host these events
- Host Town Hall meetings in various locations across the state
- Partner with Hands and Voices to offer literacy night activities on a regular basis across the state
- Purchase Live streaming equipment for MSA to share its events/activities
- Collaborate with D/HH and BVI teacher prep programs
- Complete strategic planning process and implement plan
- Provide opportunities for staff to travel the state to spread awareness of the MSA schools/programs
- Utilize students/parents as spokespeople for the schools

Potential or Existing Threats

- Enrollment
- Budget
- Relationships/partnerships between MSA and school districts
- Accuracy of perceptions and understanding about MSAB and MSAD’s programs and services among school districts, parents and other relevant stakeholders
- Statewide visibility of MSA
- Validity and appropriateness of MDE-required tests for many MSAB and MSAD students
- Aging campus infrastructure
- Capacity of qualified applicants for vacant professional positions
- Pushing statewide visibility before improving MSAB and MSAD
- Competitiveness of salaries and benefits offered by MSA

Appendix—3:

Acknowledgements

MSA recognizes and appreciates the significant investment of time and resources required to develop the 2018-2023 strategic plan. Grateful thanks goes to the following people.

MSA Board:

- Marty Duncan, Chair
- Alex Caddy, Vice Chair
- Sonny Wasilowski, Officer of Business Affairs
- Kristin Oien
- Nicole Halabi
- Jan Bailey
- Oluwagbenga Ogungbe

MSA Strategic Planning Steering Committee:

- Alex Caddy, MSA Board
- Kristin Oien, MSA Board
- Max Hoflock, MSAB Student
- Ryan Stumbo, MSAD Student
- John Davis, MSAB Director
- Anne Grace Donatucci, MSAD Director
- Brittany Thomforde, MSA Director of Student Support Services
- Jody Olson, MSAD Assistant Director of Education
- Jessica McBurnett, MSAB Dorm Director
- Ronda Jo Donatucci, MSAD Dorm Director
- Ryan Johnson, MSAD Parent (Site Council Representative)
- Lisa Larson, MSAB Parent (Site Council Representative)
- Terry Wilding, MSA Superintendent

Special Thanks to:

- Kim Barron, MSA Director of Communications and Community Engagement
- Lola Brand, MSA Executive Assistant to the Superintendent
- Interpreters: Nettie Peters, Amy Amundsen, Hannah Breitbach, Renee Kerrigan, Ariane Schaefer, Diane Skjeveland, Ashley Troke, & Gina Alvarado
- All participants in the stakeholder meetings

Introduction

The Minnesota State Academies (MSA) include the Minnesota School for the Blind (MSAB), the Minnesota School for the Deaf (MSAD), and statewide services. Established in 1858 as an agency, MSA is the leader in the State of Minnesota in providing services to students who are Blind, Visually Impaired, Deaf, Hard of Hearing or DeafBlind and their families. As part of this strategic plan, we aspire to providing greater levels of service and support for students and families throughout the state of Minnesota.

The MSA 2018-2023 Strategic Plan articulates the schools' and agency's goals for the next 5 years. The mission, vision, and guiding beliefs, which were meticulously reviewed and revised as part of the strategic planning process, reflect the values of MSA and provide the foundation for all decisions, actions, and activities to be taken during the life of this plan.

Dedicated staff, empowered students, involved parents, supportive alumni and invested stakeholders are committed to working together to accomplish the strategic goals. They will continue to enhance MSA as the foremost resource in the state and region for Deaf, Blind, and DeafBlind education.

NEW: During Spring 2021, MSA did a mid-plan review, starting with an in-depth review of each goal area, our progress over the past 2 ½ years, and feedback from the steering committee members. After that, the steering committee shared proposed updates and new action steps with the community via site councils, a parent/community forum, a staff forum, and surveys. Upon receiving the results of the survey, the steering committee reviewed the results and proposed the following action steps to be added to our strategic plan. Moving forward, committees for each goal area will meet monthly (aligned with our site council schedules) and continue to work on accomplishing our goals and completing the identified action steps.

****For individuals using a screen reader to read this document, each addition to this document has been marked with either "UPDATED" or "NEW".****

Strategic Goals, 5-Year Goals, Objectives, Action Steps

Goal Area #1: School Climate

Strategic Goal:

Minnesota State Academies (MSA) is a place where all are welcomed, informed, involved, and safe.

Five-Year Goal:

Minnesota State Academies (MSA) will create and implement systems for timely, consistent, and effective internal and external communications, student support, and professional development.

Objective 1: [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Establish mechanisms for improving internal communication.

1a: Create teaming opportunities—e.g., dorm/school, aides/teachers, MSAB/MSAD, and within departments

- ~~Identify potential teams and prioritize most needed teaming opportunities.~~ (Completed)
- ~~Create a protocol for teams, to include identifying purpose, participants, schedule, agenda, facilitation, note taking and dissemination.~~ (Completed)
- ~~Implement~~ (Completed)
- **NEW: Increase frequency of open forums.**
- **NEW: Utilize Site Council Meetings for updates and committee work on Strategic Plan Goals.**
- **UPDATED: Continue joint training sessions, expand opportunities for cross-department training sessions and/or meetings.**

1b: Increase communication from administration to staff.

- ~~Review and get feedback from staff on existing communication activities.~~ (Completed)
- ~~Develop new methods for information sharing with feedback component and revise as needed.~~ (Completed)
- **NEW: Utilize open forums more often to discuss information with staff**
- **NEW: Use MSA's new app to share notifications with staff**
- **NEW: Explore different ways to communicate in cases of emergency, including phone and text messaging.**

1c: Develop staff survey.

- ~~Design and administer survey and analyze results related to issues of importance to staff, e.g., employment conditions; supervisory support; effectiveness of communication from administration, among staff, with families; morale; safety (1st survey completed)~~
- **NEW: Annual Staff Climate Survey – compare results and follow up with actions to support areas of need.**
- **NEW: Communicate results of surveys with staff members.**
-

1d: Increase communication from administration to students.

- ~~Review and get feedback from students on existing communication activities.~~ (Initial feedback gathered)
- ~~Develop new methods for information sharing with feedback component~~

and revise as needed. (Completed – continue)

- NEW: Increase use and efficiency of mass communication system.
- NEW: Incorporate more student feedback/engagement in decision making

1e: Develop student survey.

- ~~Design and administer survey and analyze results related to issues of importance to students, e.g., effectiveness of communication from administration, from staff, safety, behavior, health, academic rigor, social opportunities, cultural diversity, critical mass.~~ (1st survey completed)
- NEW: Annual Student Climate Survey – compare results and follow up with actions to support areas of need.
- NEW: Communicate results of surveys with students
- NEW: Expand PBIS program to all students on both campuses; provide supports as appropriate to each students' needs.

Objective 2: [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Establish mechanisms for improving external communication with parents and families.

2a: Increase communication from MSA to parents/families.

- ~~Review and get feedback from parents on quality and frequency of existing communication from administration, teachers, dorm staff, athletic staff. (Initial feedback gathered)~~
- ~~Review and get feedback from parents on quality and frequency of existing communication methods, e.g., newsletters, website, email, classroom letters, social media. (Initial feedback gathered)~~
- Develop new or revise existing methods for information sharing with feedback component; make modifications as needed.
- NEW: Continue periodic updates and newsletters – including ASL versions. Increase number of spotlight videos focused on programs, services, and staff.
- NEW: Increase use of social media, emails, texts, phone calls, to communicate with parents/families

2b: Increase parent to parent communication.

- Updated: Develop and distribute a student/parent directory.
- NEW: Continue to create more social opportunities/events for parents/families to connect.

2c: Increase parent/family engagement.

- Updated: Continue to expand opportunities for virtual participation.
- ~~Collect data on parent/family engagement during 2018-19 School Year. (Completed)~~
- NEW: Collect data on parent/family engagement on an annual basis
- NEW: Increase parent/family forums and include parents on strategic planning committees.

Objective 3: [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Establish mechanisms for improving external communications with partners and stakeholders.

3a: Increase communication from MSA to external partners/stakeholders.

- Identify current and potential partners/stakeholders (Completed)
- ~~Review and get feedback from partners/stakeholders on existing communication activities, e.g., website, social media, newspapers, annual reports, town hall meetings. (Completed – may continue pending additional feedback)~~
- Develop new methods for information sharing with feedback component

and revise as needed. (Completed – may continue pending additional feedback)

- NEW: Establish our own list-serv or e-mail subscription list and become more active in existing list-servs. Share periodic updates and newsletters, including ASL videos. Increase number of spotlight videos focused on programs, services, and staff.
- NEW: Increase frequency of strategic planning updates/forums for community members, including alumni of MSA.
- NEW: Increase use of social media to share information about MSA with stakeholders, with the aim of increasing enrollment.

3b: Increase collaborative activities with agencies/stakeholders.

- ~~Identify current collaborative activities with partners/stakeholders.~~ (Completed)
- ~~Review and get feedback from partners/stakeholders on existing collaborative activities.~~ (Completed – may continue pending additional feedback)
- Develop new opportunities for collaborative activities with feedback component and revise as needed.
- NEW: Continue to seek out opportunities for MSA to collaborate with other agencies, stakeholder groups. Send representatives from MSA to participate in stakeholder activities.

Objective 4: [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Establish mechanisms for ensuring student and staff safety and a positive working/learning environment.

4a: Create clear and consistent expectations.

- ~~Review staff handbook(s) for clarity and comprehensiveness of expectations, e.g., professional behavior, dress code, boundaries with students, confidentiality, attendance; revise as needed; share with staff.~~ (Completed)
- ~~Review student handbook for clarity and comprehensiveness of expectations, e.g., behavior, attendance, harassment~~ (Completed)
- NEW: Continue reviewing and updating staff and student handbooks annually based on feedback from staff/students.
- NEW: Update handbooks and policies, using an equity lens to assess practices and policies currently in use.

4b: Review student safety

- UPDATED: Continue to investigate, identify, and prioritize issues related to student safety, e.g., bullying; cyber bullying; marginalization based on disability, race, status, other protected areas; need for support groups; use of drugs and alcohol. Utilize information from student climate surveys.
- NEW: Implement strategies and approaches within PBIS framework and student development workshops.
- UPDATED: Continue to develop and implement action plans for prioritized issues, including data collection and analysis.

4c: Review crisis prevention plans and response.

- Review current crisis protocols, to include technology infrastructure; defining of staff roles; practice schedules; communication with parents/others during/after event; post crisis debriefs/evaluation.
- Revise protocols as needed.
- Develop and implement plan for securing infrastructure upgrades as identified. (Partially completed – to be continued with mass communication system and other upgrades)

- NEW: Update crisis response policy and procedures; post “quick-look” crisis response guidance in all classrooms and student areas.

4d: Explore Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) or other school-wide behavioral support programs (Initial implementation at MSAD completed – continue work to implement this at MSAB.)

- NEW: Continue to enhance and expand on PBIS on both campuses

4e: (NEW) Provide more opportunities for social/emotional and leadership development for students.

- NEW: Seek out more opportunities for MSAB/MSAD students to socialize with each other and host events together.
- NEW: Provide more opportunities for middle school and high school students to socialize – providing positive role models for younger students.
- NEW: Increase cultural competency learning opportunities for students, including anti-bias/anti-racism activities.
- NEW: Involve students more in decision-making for events and activities.

Objective 5: [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Establish mechanisms for providing professional development for all staff.

5a: Provide training.

- ~~Review strategic plan and school improvement plan to determine training priorities.~~ (Initial information gathering and plan completed)
- ~~Survey staff to determine needs~~ (Initial information gathering and plan completed)
- ~~Develop training plan aligned to priorities~~ (Initial information gathering and plan completed)
- ~~Implement~~ (Initial information gathering and plan completed)

5b: Provide ongoing support.

- Create ongoing support plan for reinforcing training provided.
- NEW: Continue annual professional development planning, including input from teachers and staff
- NEW: increase training opportunities for staff other than teachers, including diversity/cultural competency training.
- NEW: Increase and emphasize anti-bias, anti-racism, and diversity awareness training for all staff.
- NEW: Create checklists, buddy system, and resource books for new employees.

5c: Develop tracking system for professional development (individual and school-wide) (System implemented in HR for mandated training and policy reviews.)

- NEW: Enhance system to include internal professional development sessions, conferences/external training, etc.

Goal Area #2: Student Life

Strategic Goal:

The Student Life program supports and develops educational goals by providing student-centered programs, activities and social opportunities that allow all day and residential students to discover self-identity and enrich their lives now and in the future.

Five-Year Goal:

Student Life will provide an increasing array of quality programs and activities, facilitated by appropriately trained staff that result in higher student engagement and maximize services and resources between both campuses.

Objective 1: ([Link to ASL video](#))

Establish a mechanism for improving the quality of Student Life activities, the level of student engagement in planning and participation, and the most effective use of resources.

1a: Determine best method for improving student engagement.

- **UPDATED:** Continue development of committees or groups that focus on improving student engagement (e.g., site council, Student Body Government, Student Council) and increase use of appropriate avenues for gathering input/fostering engagement.
- ~~Assign committee or group the responsibility for carrying out activities in 1b.~~
- **NEW:** Empower students to plan/coordinate activities.
- **NEW:** Increase amount of educational/living skills training activities (i.e., cooking, shopping, laundry, other life skills); open to all dorm and after school program students.

1b: **UPDATED:** Develop, disseminate, and analyze annual dorm surveys:

- ~~Develop audience friendly survey questions for students, staff, and parents to give feedback on current activities and programs and suggestions for revised or new activities and programs. (Initial survey completed – Needs updated/periodic surveys – see below)~~
- ~~Create survey.~~
- ~~Determine strategies to maximize responses and timelines for survey completion.~~
- ~~Distribute and collect surveys.~~
- ~~Analyze survey data.~~
- ~~Determine next steps.~~
- **NEW:** Conduct annual dorm surveys to gather feedback and ideas for the dorm program. Utilize feedback in planning for the following school year.

1c: Review individual and shared resources at MSAB/MSAD and provide opportunities for collaborating on student-centered activities/programs.

- **UPDATED:** Continue to implement modifications/accommodations to allow all students to participate. Incorporate opportunities for non-MSA students to participate in selected student activities.
- **UPDATED:** Continue to implement supports needed for staff and students to ensure activities and interactions are effective and positive.
- Plan ongoing evaluation of joint programs and activities to

determine needed adjustments.

- NEW: Expand activity options for students. Ensure that activities are appropriately designed and accessible.

1d: UPDATED: Explore opportunities to include community resources and activities as part of the Student Life program

- NEW: Bring in speakers/off campus work experience/community service opportunities for after school programs.
- NEW: Increase efforts to involve parents in after school/residential programming.
- NEW: Explore opportunities for work experiences for students on campus.

Objective 2: ([Link to ASL video](#))

Provide support to staff on increasing staff engagement with students and motivating students to engage in Student Life programs and activities.

2a: UPDATED: Continue to provide staff/professional development on topics such as:

- Awareness & understanding of legal obligations (e.g., accessibility, IEP) and documentation.
- Universal Design for planning activities
- Addressing cultural needs of students in a responsive and effective manner
- Supporting the health of our students (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual, etc.)
- Awareness and understanding of student development, and the effective and appropriate management of student discipline, behavior, and motivation.
- Improve effectiveness of school-home communication including but not limited to family awareness of Student Life opportunities and their children's level of engagement in activities.
- Continue focus on monitoring and motivating student engagement.
- NEW: Opportunities to connect/network with other deaf and blind schools/programs to share professional resources.
- NEW: Continue development of resource books – share resources with families and teachers/professionals statewide (i.e., MSAB's ECC resource books in the dorms)

Goal Area #3: Instruction and Assessment

Strategic Goal:

MSA is a place where students receive accessible, rigorous and standards-based education and related services with assessments that accurately reflect student growth.

5-Year Goal:

MSA will create and implement a system that fosters collaboration and coordination between the two schools to ensure the provision of curriculum, instruction, and assessment in alignment with our Guiding Beliefs.

Objective 1: [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Ensure accessibility.

1a: UPDATED: Continue to identify and prioritize need areas (e.g., materials, environment, communication, testing) (Initial information gathering completed – Continue to gather and update information)

1b: Develop plan to meet prioritized needs.

1c: Continue to purchase accessible equipment and materials and provide professional development to staff and students.

- NEW: Utilize Tech Coaches to provide training and support for staff in ensuring that classroom materials, instruction, etc. is accessible to all.

Objective 2: [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Provide appropriate assessments.

2a: ~~Inventory existing assessments~~ (Initial inventory completed)

2b: Identify and purchase appropriate assessments.

2c: Accurately assess all students with valid tools.

2d: Measure student growth

2e: Share individual data with students and families and aggregate data with appropriate stakeholders.

2f: Examine assessment data to guide instruction.

2g: NEW: Investigate use of other metrics for data gathering (in addition to IEP goals)

2h: NEW: Explore standards-based IEPs and how we can effectively measure and encourage growth/rigor for all of our students.

2i: NEW: Examine our grading practices and determine appropriate ways to assess and report our students' progress through the curriculum.

Objective 3: [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Identify curriculum and resources.

3a: UPDATED: Continue to refine our inventory of existing curriculum resources, instructional materials, assistive equipment, and small equipment/accessories.

3b: Expand the variety of resources and increase the capacity to meet all student needs.

3c: Examine/revise existing curriculum cycle to include each subject area, electives, and address needs of students with additional needs as well as new courses in the future. During the review process include review of cultural diversity, accessibility, equity, and validity.

- NEW: Explore in-house curriculum/spiral progression for ASL instruction
- NEW: Add curriculum and resources for online classes
- NEW: Add curriculum and resources for transition, vocational, elective, and

CTE courses.

3d: Increase opportunities for Advanced Placement (AP) and Post- Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) courses, including online courses offered through universities.

3e: Review Expanded Core Curriculum and develop implementation approaches.

- NEW: Create Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) resource books for dorms
- NEW: Coordinate efforts to expand ECC resources on both campuses.

Objective 4: [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Provide Professional Development

4a: Consistently use staff performance evaluation measures, surveys, and state/national trends to determine professional development areas.

- NEW: Seek out opportunities for staff to observe, visit, and/or collaborate with other schools/special education programs.

4b: Strengthen the mentoring program for new staff.

- NEW: Create training/orientation for newly hired staff and substitutes before starting job assignments.
- NEW: Create checklists, buddy system, and resource books for new employees.

4c: Provide professional development around teaming and educational responsibilities.

4d: Provide professional development to support teachers/service providers in interpreting assessment data to drive quality instruction.

4e: NEW: Ensure technology training is provided along with new technology tools and software.

Objective 5: [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Provide technology for staff and students.

5a: ~~Inventory existing devices and software~~ (Completed – update with new devices and software annually)

5b: UPDATED: Continue to provide staff training on existing/new technology devices, apps, and software.

5c: Review and determine future technology needs (purchasing cycle) on an annual basis.

5d: UPDATED: Expand technology curriculum to include applicable apps, programs, and digital learning platforms. Integrate technology instruction into all classes/instructional activities.

5e: Develop a process for determining the need for and use of assistive technology.

Objective 6: [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Strengthen instruction.

6a: UPDATED: Ensure coordination of instructional opportunities between both campuses for all students. Improve communication between departments for individual student needs.

6b: UPDATED: Complete a course catalogue including course description, prerequisites, locations, state/school standards, and resources.

6c: Raise staff expectations for academic rigor appropriate to each student, including up to or exceeding grade level.

6d: Provide appropriate test preparation through teaching test-taking strategies and practice opportunities.

6e: UPDATED: Increase distance learning opportunities and services for both MSA and non-MSA students (start offering online classes and webinars for non-MSA students)

6f: NEW: Expand opportunities for student development for HS students (i.e., leadership retreats, social/emotional development, cultural competency).

Goal Area 4: Statewide Visibility

Strategic Goal:

MSA will be known by families and all school districts as a leader and partner in the education of students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, Blind or Visually Impaired for its campuses, as well as a resource center for information and outreach activities to support school districts and families statewide.

Five-Year Goal: (4A)

MSA will develop resources for school districts and families to support students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, Blind, or Visually Impaired around the state.

Objective 1: ([Link to ASL video](#))

Establish new and strengthen existing relationships and share information about available resource support with statewide stakeholders.

1a: UPDATED: Continue to identify and participate in statewide and regional professional and family-focused meetings and events. (i.e., Low Incidence Leadership Forum, Directors Forum, Hands and Voices, advisory councils).

1b: Create a plan for attendance (who will go to which events/meetings/activities). (Completed – continue with updated information and/or new opportunities.

1c: Actively share information about MSA.

1d: UPDATED: Gather data and maintain information regarding contacts, presentations, and inquiries.

1e: Increase collaboration with teacher training programs and expand practicum opportunities.

1f: Increase attendance and/or presentations at conferences

- Develop topics and identify staff who can present.
- Collect contact information from participants for follow up.

1g: NEW: Establish our own list-serv, mailing lists, subscriptions, etc. and become more active in existing list-servs.

1h: NEW: When hosting guest presenters/trainers on campus, invite participation from stakeholders outside of MSA.

Objective 2: ([Link to ASL video](#))

Offer professional development to meet region- or district-specific needs.

2a: Collaborate with school districts to identify needs.

2b: Develop an interpreter evaluation procedure and mentoring program and pilot it with volunteer districts. (partnering with Region 10)

2c: Develop on-line trainings and supports based on district-identified priorities.

2d: Host statewide training and/or webinars on low incidence topics.

2e: Open MSA trainings/information events to non-MSA students and educators.

2f: NEW: Increase capacity and resources necessary to host online webinars/presentations.

Objective 3:

(put on hold pending funding availability – see new objective 3 below)

Form a mobile assessment team to provide in-district evaluations.

3a: Establish pilot team.

- 3b: Develop a process for service provision
- 3c: Conduct 3-5 evaluations.
- 3d: Collect feedback from districts receiving the service, share results, and determine statewide need.
- 3e: Request resources to establish ongoing mobile team.

Objective 3 (NEW): [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Increase Training and Support to School Districts Statewide

3a: NEW: Develop online resources on the MSA website.

- NEW: Use expertise on our campuses to develop webinars, resource books, statewide youth events, playlists on YouTube, etc. for teachers/school districts. Work with staff to increase capacity and provide necessary support.
- NEW: Explore funding opportunities to host guest speakers/events – professional development and family workshops/events.
- NEW: Revise our brochures to direct readers to our website.
- NEW: Work with library systems across MN to host town hall/ASL story-time events for families.

Five-Year Goal: (4B)

All school districts in Minnesota will recognize MSA as an educational option and include it in the IEP/placement discussions for students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, Blind or Visually Impaired.

Objective 1: [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Improve public relations and branding.

1a: UPDATED: Continue to update the MSA website to include MSAB, MSAD, and statewide events and resources.

- NEW: Expand website to include additional resources and training opportunities.
- NEW: Offer more features (i.e., online payments, ASL videos, Spanish translation, etc.)
- NEW – Add a “feedback” box for our website.

1b: UPDATED: Continue to refine/update MSA publications - e.g., The Companion, MSA pamphlets, newsletters, white papers, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), Enrollment Process, World’s Best Workforce, MSA Annual Report and share them via a variety of communication channels.

1c: Review current use of social media; revise and update as appropriate.

- NEW: Expand social media presence; involve student body government and student council; and seek out opportunities to engage non-MSA students.

1d: ~~Develop logo(s) & branding strategies, exhibit booth displays, campus banners, freeway signs~~—(Completed)

1e: NEW: Increase development of videos highlighting our programs and services and share with families, teachers, and other programs statewide with the aim of increasing enrollment.

- NEW: Increase development and sharing of student-created videos.

Objective 2: [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Host MSA -sponsored statewide and regional events for families and district stakeholders

2a: List and analyze benefit of established programs. (Ongoing)

2b: Create more opportunities to bring students, families, and district staff to campus.

- NEW: Maximize the use of Zoom for virtual activities – offer opportunities more frequently.
- NEW: Offer live-streaming or virtual participation for more events, especially for family events and professional development opportunities.

2c: Share information about MSA events and resources (open house, social events, short-term programs, town hall meetings) with district staff and non-MSA families.

2d: Host MSA-sponsored activities and events in various regions of the state.

2e: Conduct events and collect feedback from participants regarding value/benefit for future planning.

Goal Area #5: Transition

Strategic Goal:

The transition programs at MSA provide an array of quality programs and trainings that lead to independence in an ever-changing world.

Five-Year Goal:

The MSA transition program develops and supports transitional goals by providing student-centered programs, resources, courses, trainings, and work experiences that allow students to successfully transition to life afterschool.

Objective 1: [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Strengthen transition programs/resources.

1a: UPDATED: Maintain an inventory of existing programs, resources, and curriculum, including assessment tools.

1b: UPDATED: Develop, disseminate, and analyze annual surveys focused on transition needs – sent to students and families of transition age students:

- Develop audience-friendly survey questions for students, staff, and parents (including parents of recent graduates) to obtain feedback on current activities and programs, and suggestions for revised or new activities and programs.
- Create survey.
- Determine strategies to maximize responses and timelines for survey completion.
- Distribute and collect surveys.
- Analyze survey data; determine next steps.

1c: UPDATED: Develop, disseminate, and analyze annual surveys for graduates related to their preparation for life after high school and their current school or work status (1, 3, 5 years).

- NEW: Prepare annual report to be shared with the MSA board

1d: Locate resources/partners/organizations to increase MSA's transition program capacity. (Completed, ongoing)

- NEW: Increase off-campus visits with students to businesses and other places of employment.

1e: Provide opportunities for transition staff to tour and/or contact other transition programs to gain ideas and establish a support network (in state programs, schools for the deaf or blind) (Completed, ongoing)

1f: Develop information about the MSA transition program and distribute statewide. NEW: (Refer to Statewide Visibility goal above – resources and webinars/training opportunities)

1g: Evaluate current practices regarding individualized transition program development for students; revise process as needed.

1h: NEW: Increase opportunities for students to visit Minnesota colleges and training programs related to their transition goals.

Objective 2: [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Review/design courses

2a: Inventory existing courses (Completed – continue to expand based on new 7-period class schedule)

2b: Develop/expand transition courses based on survey and student needs.

- UPDATED: Expand Vocational/Career & Technical Education (CTE) classes. Include classes related to preparation for life after high school (i.e., financial literacy, budgeting, FACS, citizenship, basic auto/home repair)

- UPDATED: Work experiences and career readiness. Include career awareness classes for Grades K-8
- College (Dual credit courses, PSEO)
- Independent Living/Assisted Living

2c: UPDATED: Utilize appropriate/accessible self-awareness/career interest inventories; implement a process for students to complete and utilize results.

- NEW: Integrate career awareness throughout our subjects and in our after-school programs

2d: UPDATED: Utilize appropriate/accessible transition-based skills checklists; implement a process for students to complete and utilize results.

2e: Strengthen current portfolio process for students to collect and use all transition materials and resources.

2f: Develop early career-awareness (K-8) class activities.

2g: NEW: Offer CPR, AED, and First Aid training for students.

Objective 3: [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Develop short term programs to support transition skills.

3a: UPDATED: Identify and provide short-term transition programs. Collaborate with school districts to invite non-MSA students and families.

3b: Establish, revise, and/or expand summer transition programs.

3c: Establish, revise, and/or expand school year short-term transition programs.

3d: Develop information-sharing materials re: short term programs and distribute statewide.

3e: NEW: Explore the possibility of student-led business opportunities.

3f: NEW: Provide transition webinars/workshops for MSA and non-MSA students.

3g: NEW: Provide transition webinars/workshops for parents of high-school aged students.

3h: NEW: Bring in guest speakers (in-person or virtually) to discuss careers with students – with focus on speakers who are D/HH, B/VI, or DB. Include speakers with diverse backgrounds.

Objective 4: [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Provide training.

4a: Identify existing training needs.

4b: Determine and define the roles of school and dorm staff in the transition programs.

4c: Expand the participation for both school and dorm staff in the planning and implementation of the IEP transition plan.

4d: Establish comprehensive 14-21 training plan for school/dorm staff.

4e: Implement a student-driven IEP process in which students lead their own meeting as appropriate; design and implement training for staff and students.

4f: NEW: Collaborate with outside agencies and organizations to avoid overlapping or duplication of services – Seek out opportunities to provide activities/training collaboratively.

4h: NEW: Share on-campus workshops, guest speakers, and other events with statewide stakeholders (students, teachers, families).

Objective 5: [\(Link to ASL video\)](#)

Expand work experiences.

5a: Identify existing and expand on and off campus work experience

options/partners (work sites, job shadowing, volunteer opportunities, apprenticeships) (Completed, ongoing)

5b: Collaborate with State Services for the Blind (SSB) and Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and other stakeholders to identify work placements in students' home communities.

5c: Create on-campus summer work opportunities for students.

5d: Identify a work readiness checklist for use in preparing and evaluating students on the job.

- **NEW: Create courses to prepare students for work (i.e., career exploration/readiness, specific skill-based courses, communication strategies, etc.)**

5e: Prepare students for employment - e.g., developing a resume, filling out an application, interviewing, daily work behavior.

5f: **NEW: Seek out work opportunities on-campus for dorm students after school.**

Acknowledgements

MSA recognizes and appreciates the significant investment of time and resources required to complete the mid-plan review. Thanks go to the MSA Board, the Strategic Plan steering committee, the individuals who participated in the forums and surveys, the administrators who assisted in gathering input and supporting the updates to this plan, and the site councils for their support.

Also, thank you to Kim Barron for all your work behind the scenes. Thank you to the interpreting team for supporting communication in all of our meetings.



2018-2023 Strategic Plan Annual Report

July 2019

Minnesota State Academies

WHO WE ARE

Established in 1858, the Minnesota State Academies (MSA) is the leader in the State of Minnesota in providing services to students who are Blind, Visually Impaired, Deaf, Hard of Hearing or DeafBlind and their families. Our academies include the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind (MSAB) and the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (MSAD). We provide a broad range of educational options from infancy through age 21 for students from all corners of the state. We also provide a wealth of resources, educational tools and strategies, and trained/knowledgeable personnel that are available to support students statewide.



VISION

MSA empowers every student to achieve, care, and thrive in an ever-changing world.

MISSION

MSA provides a rigorous, student-centered educational program in a fully accessible, language-rich environment to maximize each student's full potential. Additionally, MSA provides statewide resources and professional expertise to parents, families, partners, and educational programs in Minnesota.



OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Dedicated staff, empowered students, involved parents, supportive alumni and invested stakeholders, along with the support of our governing board, are committed to working together to accomplish the strategic goals. They will continue to enhance MSA as the foremost resource in the state and region for Deaf, Blind, and DeafBlind education. The MSA 2018-2023 strategic plan articulates the schools' and agency's goal for the next 5 years. This report is a summary of our activities and work towards our goal during the 2018-2019 school year.



Strategic Goals

Below is an overview of our strategic goal areas. For more details and a full listing of objectives and action plans, please refer to the full Strategic Plan, which is available on our website: www.msa.state.mn.us.

Goal Area #1: School Climate

Minnesota State Academies (MSA) is a place where all are welcomed, informed, involved and safe.

Goal Area #2: Student Life

The Student Life supports and develops educational goals by providing student-centered programs, activities and social opportunities that allow all day and residential students to discover self-identity and enrich their lives now and in the future.

Goal Area #3: Instruction and Assessment

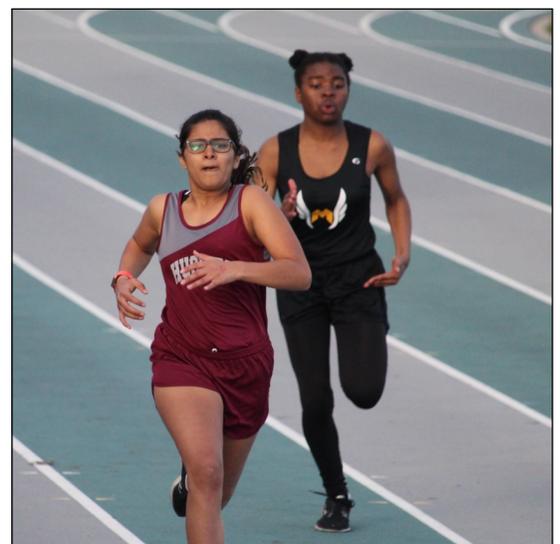
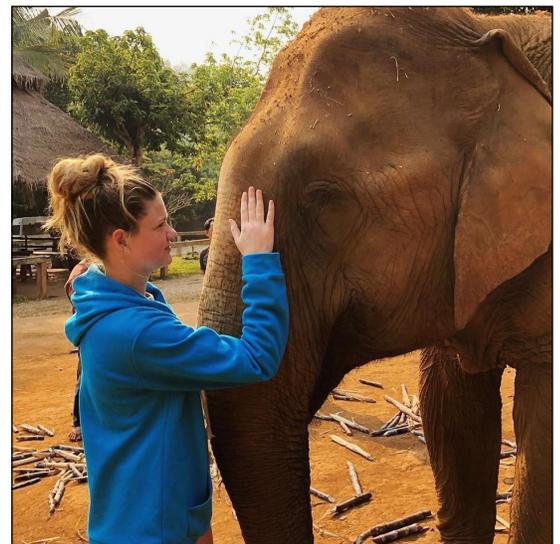
MSA is a place where students receive accessible, rigorous and standards-based education and related services with assessments that accurately reflect student growth.

Goal Area #4: Statewide Visibility

MSA will be known by families and all school districts as a leader and partner in the education of students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, Blind or Visually Impaired for its campuses, as well as a resource center for information and outreach activities to support school districts and families statewide.

Goal Area #5: Transition

The transition programs at MSA provide an array of quality programs and trainings that lead to independence in an ever-changing world.



Goal Area 1: School Climate

STRATEGIC GOAL

Minnesota State Academies (MSA) is a place where all are welcomed, informed, involved and safe.

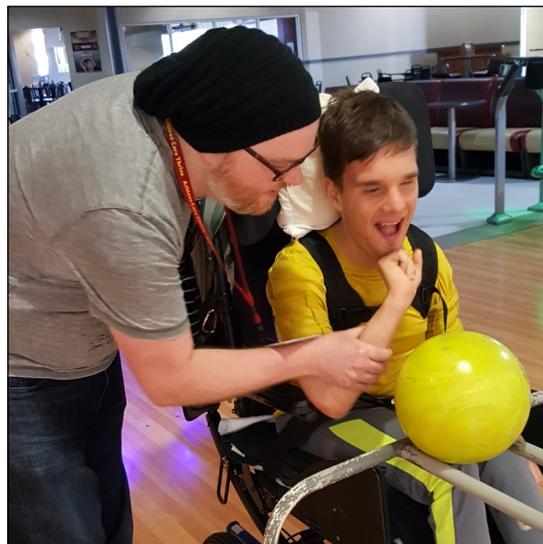
CURRENT FOCUS AREAS

- Improving internal and external communication with students, staff, families and stakeholders/partners
- Ensuring student and staff safety and a positive working/learning environment
- Professional development for staff

UPDATE

As of the end of the 2018-2019 school year, we have:

- Facilitated and participated in 8 trainings/workshops with various stakeholders
- Gathered feedback from staff and students at the end of the school year
- Established monthly newsletters for both campuses
- Livestreamed a total of 9 events between February and May 2019
- Revamped the MSAD quarterly school newsletter, The Companion, added a school newsletter for MSAB (MSAB Chronicles), and made them available electronically
- Established parent-teacher conferences (Fall and Spring)
- Began monthly superintendent video updates on YouTube in November 2018 (a total of 8 videos)
- Provided 54 professional development opportunities throughout the school year
- Hosted 57 family-oriented activities
- Held 37 student forms and workshops focusing on a variety of topics, including personal safety and healthy relationships



Goal Area 2: Student Life



STRATEGIC GOAL

The Student Life program supports and develops educational goals by providing student-centered programs, activities and social opportunities that allow all day and residential students to discover self-identity and enrich their lives now and in the future.

CURRENT FOCUS AREAS

- Improving the quality of Student Life activities
- Increasing staff and student engagement
- Develop survey and gather feedback on current activities and programs, and suggestions for revised or new activities and programs



UPDATE

As of the end of the 2018-2019 school year, we have:

- Developed a survey for students, staff and parents to be distributed in Fall 2019
- Hosted 9 student-focused events, including a health fair, STEAM workshops, and Scarecrow Festival
- Begun hosting collaborative events involving both campuses, with more planned for Fall 2019
- Provided 7 opportunities including community resources and activities
- Provided 5 trainings/workshops for dormitory staff as part of professional development



Goal Area 3: Instruction and Assessment

STRATEGIC GOAL

MSA is a place where students receive accessible, rigorous and standards-based education and related services with assessments that accurately reflect student growth.

CURRENT FOCUS AREAS

- Ensuring accessibility of our assessment and instructional materials
- Providing professional development
- Strengthening instruction

UPDATE

As of the end of the 2018-2019 school year, we have:

- Established an accountability committee that met quarterly and produced the World's Best Workforce annual report
- Collected and analyzed various assessment and testing data
- Continued providing feedback to the Minnesota Department of Education regarding accessibility for state testing materials
- Updated our assistive technology devices and equipment
- Contracted with a Deafblind consultant/provided intervenor training for staff working with DeafBlind students
- Provided accessibility training for staff to ensure all of our materials distributed are accessible
- Established an Assistive Technology Team to develop our technology assessment process
- Made modifications to performance evaluation levels in order to ensure consistency across departments
- Expanded the staff mentor program for Fall 2019
- Coordinated 8 instructional opportunities between both campuses, including the Resource Fair and swimming program



Goal Area 4: Statewide Visibility



STRATEGIC GOAL

MSA will be known by families and all school districts as a leader and partner in the education of students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, Blind or Visually Impaired for its campuses, as well as a resource center for information and outreach activities to support school districts and families statewide.

CURRENT FOCUS AREAS

- Sharing information about MSA's resources
- Serving as a statewide resource
- Improving public relations and branding

UPDATE

As of the end of the 2018-2019 school year, we have:

- Redesigned our website, launched July 1
- Created Instagram and Twitter accounts for both campuses
- Grown our social media audience by attracting an additional 616 followers across our channels
- Experienced 48,606 visits to our website since September
- Handled 105 inquiries for information and resources from MSA
- Redesigned our logo and branding
- Received legislative approval for the placement of directional signs for MSAD and MSAB on Interstate 35 exits in Faribault
- Begun planning for Family Immersion Weekend, scheduled for October 2019
- Participated in 15 events promoting MSA, with a total of 2,615 impressions made between September 2018 and May 2019
- Provided 25 tours to potential families, professionals and stakeholders
- Hosted a total of 7 practicum teaching students



Goal Area 5: Transition

STRATEGIC GOAL

The transition programs at MSA provide an array of quality programs and trainings that lead to independence in an ever-changing world.

CURRENT FOCUS AREAS

- Strengthen transition programs/resources
- Review and design transition courses
- Develop short-term programs to support transition skills
- Provide training for staff and students
- Expand work experience opportunities for students

UPDATE

As of the end of the 2018-2019 school year, we have:

- Gathered community resources, local work study sites/ contacts, and community service providers
- Connected with local and statewide organizations as well as transition programs at other schools for the deaf
- Established pilot transition program at MSAD, with 5 students enrolled
- Incorporated career interest inventories that are used in the classroom
- Established processes to help students gather information to include in their portfolios/resumes
- Began implementation of career awareness activities for students in Kindergarten to 8th grade
- Established Pathways to Life, a pilot summer transition program for deaf high school students, with 12 enrolled (6 non-MSA students)
- Provided IEP training to dormitory staff so they could participate in IEP meetings
- Added community service requirements and other work study/job shadowing experiences for our students

