

Regular Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 16, 2025 6:00 PM

MSAD Wilkins Hall, 615 Olof Hanson Drive, Faribault, MN 55021

1. Call to Order

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Adoption of Agenda

4. Public Comment:

5. Consent Agenda

5.A. MSA March 2025 Board Meeting Minutes for Approval

5.B. Human Resources Report

5.C. Donations

6. Policies

6.A. Policies for Reauthorization

6.A.1. 303: Academies Administrator (Superintendent) Selection

6.A.2. 304: Academies Administrator (Superintendent) Contract, Duties, and Evaluation

6.A.3. 518: DNR-DNI Orders

6.A.4. 750: MNRL Acquisition and Collection

6.B. New or Updated Policies for Approval

6.B.1. 423: Employee-Student Relationships

6.B.2. 625: Inclement Weather

6.B.3. 740: Special Expense Outstate Travel

6.C. Policies for First Reading

6.C.1. 451: Appropriate Use of Social Media

6.C.2. 520: Research and Student Surveys

6.C.3. 742: Imprest Fund

7. Action Items

7.A. Out of State Travel Requests

7.B. Consider Letter of Support for Faribault Outdoor Bill of Rights

7.C. Consider Appointing Site Council Members

7.D. Sonny Wasilowski, MSAD Alumni/Deaf Community Representative

8. **Information Items:**

8.A. Superintendent's Report

8.A.1. Legislative Audit Update

8.A.2. Update on 2024 Town Hall Action Items

8.B. Director's Reports

8.B.1. Fiscal Services Director

8.B.1.a. FY Year-to-Date Report

8.C. Professional Development Summaries

8.D. University of Minnesota - Duluth Elimination of Deaf Studies Minor Program

9. **Board Committee Reports**

9.A. Site Council Reports

9.B. Executive Committee

9.C. Policy Committee

10. **Announcements:**

10.A. Subsequent Meetings:

- May 14, 2025, 6:00 PM @ MSAB
- June 25, 2025, 6:00 PM @ MSAD

11. **Adjourn**



Minutes of Regular Board Meeting Minnesota State Academies Board

A Regular Board Meeting of the Minnesota State Academies Board was held Thursday, March 13, 2025, beginning at 9:00 AM in the Lysen Hall, MSAB Campus, 400 SE 6th Ave, Faribault, MN 55021.

Present: Mary Cashman-Bakken, Chair Annette Freiheit, Gbenga Ogungbe, Sara Pratt, Jamers Speier, Katie Wangberg

Absent: Hernan Moncada

Ex-Officio Present: Superintendent Terry Wilding

1. Call to Order

Chair Freiheit called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Adoption of Agenda

Superintendent Wilding requested a last-minute addition to the Action Items portion of the agenda, to include an out-of-state travel request.

Mary Cashman-Bakken made a motion to approve the agenda, as amended to include an out-of-state travel request in the Action Items. Katie Wangberg seconded, and the motion passed.

Agenda Item #8B was added to the agenda.

4. Open Forum: MSAD Chinese Studies

The MSAD Chinese Studies class shared their semester-long experience learning the Chinese language, calligraphy, currency, and history. The students collaborated with St. Cloud State University and traveled to New York to participate in the Chinese New Year festivities and to learn about Lunar New Year. They performed a song with Deaf songwriter and singer Mandy Harvey, best known for her appearance on the "America's Got Talent" television show. The students thoroughly enjoyed their experience. They then played a YouTube video of their onstage performance for the Board.

5. Public Comment:

Sonny Wasilowski, community member, MSAD alumni, and former board member wanted to remind the Board that the community and alumni is interested in the Board activities. He attended a city council meeting last night and heard concerning comments about the dwindling enrollment, whether the deaf school should be closed and students sent to mainstream schools with interpreters. He also wanted to share that there is another deaf school, a charter school in the Twin Cities, which should be considered our sister school. Their enrollment has boomed with 171

students and currently has a waiting list due to maxed out building capacity. Sonny believed that while we are not competing with them, we should be working closely with them. Sonny cherishes MSAD, and would be happy to serve on any committees, including for the next strategic plan cycle. He recalled a past bill that proposed to legislature to change statutes regarding our board, but it died on the floor. He asked the board to not forget this, but to renew our efforts.

6. Consent Agenda

A. MSA February Board Meeting Minutes for Approval

B. Human Resources Report

C. Donations: None

Sara Pratt motioned to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Mary Cashman-Bakken, the motion passed.

7. Policies

A. Policies for Reauthorization

1. 427 - Workload Limits for Special Education/Special Teachers

2. 743 - Petty Cash

Mary Cashman-Bakken moved to approve the reauthorization of both policies. Gbenga Ogungbe seconded, and the motion passed.

B. New or Updated Policies for Approval

C. Policies for First Reading

1. 423 - Employee-Student Relationships/Fraternization

2. 625 - Inclement Weather

3. 740 - Special Expense/Outstate Travel

Policies for a first reading do not need approval, just a initial review by the Board. Superintendent Wilding explained that Policy 740 was being updated following the legislative audit. The Board did not have any questions.

8. Action Items

A. Consider MSAD International Studies Trip

Mary Cashman-Bakken asked how often our students go on international trips, and wondered about the recent Chinese New Year trip. Superintendent Wilding explained that both campuses alternate each year, so it is a biennial trip for each campus. This proposal is for the MSAD students to travel in the spring of 2026, which requires the board's approval prior to making any reservations. The 2026 trip will be offered to high-school age students who are interested in participating, and who are able to commit to actively fundraising for the trip. Gbenga Ogungbe asked about fundraising efforts. Superintendent Wilding explained that the MSAD Foundation and MSAB Foundation has helped in the past, fundraiser activities are hosted to offset some of the costs, and sometimes students set up a payment plan for their expenses. Gbenga then asked whether students were missing out on instruction time if they did not go on the trip. John Davis, MSAB director, explained that the International Studies Club is considered an after-school program, which does not directly affect classroom

instruction. Mary Cashman-Bakken asked about these students missing out on classroom instruction time when they travel. Superintendent Wilding explained that students are expected to prepare ahead of time and communicate with their teachers to ensure they do not fall behind in classroom work. Jody Olson, MSAD director, added that the trips are intentionally scheduled during spring breaks to reduce the amount of missed school days.

Mary Cashman-Bakken motioned to approve the MSAD 2026 International Studies trip. Sara Pratt seconded, and the motion passed.

B: Approve Out of State Travel – Goalball (addition to the agenda)

Charles Lechtenberg requested to attend a goalball qualifier tournament to get certified in order to host our own tournament on campus. The cost will be \$940 total, including lodging and travel, and membership fees for the US Goalball organization.

Mary Cashman-Bakken moved to approve the out-of-state travel request and was seconded by Jamers Speier. The motion passed.

9. Information Items:

A. Superintendent's Report

1. Legislative Audit Update

2. Climate Survey Results

Superintendent Wilding shared that there has not been much legislative activity until recently, where the forecast budget was released. Superintendent Wilding has not yet testified at hearings yet, but should be expected to do so soon. He will also share updates on our efforts to address the legislative audit findings at every board meeting to keep everyone informed. Superintendent Wilding then shared the student, family, and staff satisfaction surveys. This information will be compared against data collected from Superintendent Wilding's meetings with each department in MSA. This will be incorporated into our long-term planning. Some things that stood out was that communication and transparency has somewhat improved, but more work is needed, especially with consistency. The board expressed its appreciation for the updates, and for sharing the action plan/next steps.

B. Director's Reports

1. MSAB Director

John Davis shared some updates, including a new student enrolling in a few weeks on top of another one expected to enroll this fall. He expects to have around 50 students total by the fall. The MSAB international studies club will be leaving for Sicily next week. The Spring concert will happen on May 9 at 10 am, and will be announced in our weekly newsletter. We are expecting 4 families to participate in the Family-Child Institute in June.

2. MSAD Director

Ryan Johnson shared that our cheerleader team did very well at the recent national tournament. They won best spirit video, best sportsmanship, and

2nd place overall. A schoolwide reading competition is underway. We are also hosting an Early Childhood Education Summit on campus during the first week of April, which will bring in early childhood education professionals from all over the country. Jody Olson added that track will start next week, and next week we will have a 6-12 performance. Our enrollment numbers are also healthier this year, with 98 students now. We will be going through MCA, ACT, and NWEA testing in the coming weeks. Ryan and Jody will also be attending the CEASD conference in April.

3. Health Services Director

Kimberly Viskocil shared her report, and explained that a large number of our students have an emergency health plan built in their IEPs, and the health services teams monitors these. 12 AEDs are available on both campuses. Through third-party billing, we are reimbursed for health-related services and items.

4. Fiscal Services Director

a. FY Year-to-Date Report

Amber Miller is currently focusing on ensuring we are using any remaining funds that cannot be rolled over to the next fiscal year. Some big-ticket items are being ordered, such as laptops that will replace older equipment that is nearing the end of life. We were recently assigned a new Executive Business Officer through the Minnesota Management and Budget office.

10. Board Committee Reports

A. Site Council Reports

B. Policy Committee

Superintendent Wilding shared that we are still struggling with quorum for both councils, and it is difficult to fill vacant positions. At the April meeting, this will be addressed in hopes that some solutions can be found. The last few meetings have been converted to information-sharing meetings due to the lack of quorum.

11. Announcements:

A. Subsequent Meetings:

- **April 16, 2025 at 6 pm, MSAD**
- **May 14, 2025 at 6 pm, MSAB**
- **June 25, 2025 at 6 pm, MSAD**

Jamers Speier requested that an update on last year's townhall activities be added to the April board meeting agenda.

12. Adjourn

Mary Cashman-Bakken moved to adjourn the meeting. Gbenga Ogungbe seconded, and the motion passed. Chair Freiheit ended the meeting at 10:08 am.

Human Resources Report

April 2025 Board Meeting

Personnel Changes March 7, 2025 – April 7, 2025

Retiring Employees:

1. Marni Schnoor-MSAB Paraprofessional

Vacancies Filled:

1. Mike Nelson, Central Services Admin Specialist
2. Ryan Kranz-Sturm, MSAD Paraprofessional
3. Halli Zumbrunnen, MSAB Residential Educator
4. Kristi Borchardt, MSAB Paraprofessional
5. Heather Maag, MSAB Paraprofessional
6. Heather Smisek, HR Director

Intermittents Hired:

1. Ryan Walker, MSAB Residential Educator
2. Julee Daniels, MSA Licensed Practical Nurse

Resignations/Separations:

1. Debra Nordquist, Central Services Admin Specialist
2. Renee Nichols, MSA Registered Nurse
3. Mic Dolan, MSAD Paraprofessional

Hired for Emergency/Temporary Appointments: None

Leave of Absences (LOA):

1. Robin Moser Oaks, MSAB HST
2. Aimee-Sever Hall, MSAD Special Teacher

Return from LOA:

1. Robin Moser Oaks, MSAB HST

Permanent Lay-Off: None

Re-Call from Lay-Off: None

Transfers: None

Work Out of Class: None

Probation to Permanent:

1. Alex Clark, MSA General Maintenance Worker
2. Darcy David, MSA General Maintenance Worker Lead
3. Ashley Barta, MSAB Paraprofessional
4. Garrett Springer, MSAD Human Services Technician

Non-Certifications: None

Phased Retirement Option Appointments (PRO): None

ECA Positions 2024-2025 and Staff Assigned:

1. MSAD Ski/Snowboard Club Sponsor – Bryan Ortiz-Porrata
2. MSAD Student Center Tutor – Nicole Argentina
3. MSAD Student Center Tutor – Jessica Oldfather
4. MSAD Student Center Tutor – Lyndsy Rydberg
5. MSAD MS/HS Assistant Drama Director -Christina= Adams
6. MSAB Winter Program Coordinator- Kelley Harrell
7. Ski/Snowboard Club Sponsor (Secondary) – Auna Ortiz
8. MSAD Prom Coordinator- Julia Forti
9. MSAD Drivers Education- Mark Schwartz
10. MSAB Cheerleading Head Coach- Stacy Akemann
11. MSAB Cheerleading Assistant Coach- Meghan Needham
12. MSAB Speech and Forensics Coach- Jamie Jindra
13. MSAB Swimming Head Coach- Stacy Akemann
14. MSAB Swimming Assistant Coach- Meghan Needham
15. MSAD Chaperone (Robotics)- Nicole Argentina
16. MSAD Chaperone (Robotics)- Marika Ulrich
17. MSAD Prom Sponsor- Julia Forti

Items that do not require Board Approval: None

March 2025 Donations

Date:	3/20/2025
From:	Donna Reuvers
Type:	Monetary Donation
Amount:	\$50.00
For:	MSAB Int'l Trip
Deposited to:	#1457
Thank You:	Crystal Underdahl/Kristin Deml

Date:	3/20/2025
From:	MSAD Foundation
Type:	Monetary Donation
Amount:	\$4500.00
For:	MSAD SAA/MSAD Robotics
Deposited to:	#1376 (\$3000.00) #1369 (\$1500.00)
Thank You:	Ryan Smith-Hastings

Date:	3/20/2025
From:	MSAD Foundation
Type:	Monetary Donation
Amount:	\$350.00
For:	MSAD SAA – Track Travel Expenses
Deposited to:	#1376
Thank You:	Ryan Smith-Hastings

Date:	3/20/2025
From:	Liberty Diversified Int'l
Type:	Monetary Donation
Amount:	\$25.00
For:	Math Competition
Deposited to:	#1354
Thank You:	Ryan Smith-Hastings

Date:	3/24/25
From:	Faribault Lions Club
Type:	Monetary Donation
Amount:	\$500.00
For:	MSAB Gen Gift (T-shirts)
Deposited to:	#1491
Thank You:	Scott Berglund

Date:	3/24/25
From:	St. Paul Foundation
Type:	Monetary Donation
Amount:	\$9803.17
For:	MSAB Designated Fund (For General Support)
Deposited to:	#1428
Thank You:	Heidi/John

Date:	3/24/25
From:	St. Paul Foundation
Type:	Monetary Donation
Amount:	\$1848.03
For:	MSAB Designated Fund (For General Support)
Deposited to:	#1428
Thank You:	Heidi/John

Policy #: 303
Title: ACADEMIES ADMINISTRATOR (SUPERINTENDENT) SELECTION
Date of Initial Approval: 04-26-2022
Revision/Re-authorization Dates:
Reviewers: MSA Human Resources; MSA Board Policy Committee

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to convey to the Minnesota State Academies (MSA) community that the authority to select and employ an academies administrator (superintendent) is vested in the MSA board.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The MSA board shall employ a superintendent to serve as the chief executive officer of the MSA board and to conduct the daily operations of the Minnesota State Academies for the Deaf and the Blind.

III. QUALIFICATIONS

A. The MSA board shall consider applicants who meet or exceed the licensing standards set by the Minnesota Board of School Administrators and qualifications established in the job description for the superintendent position. State and federal equal employment and nondiscrimination requirements shall be observed throughout the recruitment and selection process.

B. The MSA board will consider professional preparation, experience, skill and demonstrated competence of qualified applicants in making a final decision.

IV. SELECTION

A. A process for recruitment, screening, and interviewing of candidates shall be developed by the MSA board. Whenever possible, this process should include the input of the MSA community and stakeholders.

B. The MSA board may contract for assistance in the search for a superintendent.

C. The MSA board shall work with the MSA Human Resources Director to specifically identify all conditions of employment mutually agreed upon with the superintendent. In so doing, the MSA board shall observe all requirements of state and federal law, MMB regulations, and MSA policy.

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. § 123B.143 (Superintendent)

Minn. Rules, Chapter 3512

Policy #: 304
Title: Academies Administrator (Superintendent) Appointment, Duties, and Evaluation
Date of Initial Approval: 03-27-2014
Revision/Re-authorization Dates: 03-24-2016; 01-24-2019; 02-23-2022
Reviewers: MSA Human Resources; MSA Superintendent; MSA Board Policy Committee

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide for the use of an appointment letter with the Minnesota State Academies (MSA) Academies Administrator (working title – Superintendent), a position description, and the use of an approved instrument to evaluate performance.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A.** The superintendent’s appointment letter shall be used to formalize the employment relationship and to identify all conditions of employment with the superintendent.

- B.** The duties for which the superintendent is accountable shall be set forth in a position description for the superintendent and shall be measured by a performance appraisal instrument approved by the governing board in consultation with the superintendent. The governing board shall use an instrument to periodically evaluate the performance of the superintendent.

- C.** The Academies Administrator (Superintendent) position is identified by the Commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget as managerial and therefore covered by the Managerial Plan. The Academies Administrator (Superintendent) position is in the unclassified service (M.S. 125A.67, Subd.1). "Unclassified Service" defined by the Managerial Plan means all positions specifically designated as not being classified pursuant to M.S. 43A.08 and other enabling legislation. Unclassified employees do not accrue seniority; do not serve a probationary period; are not subject to the layoff provisions of this plan; and may be terminated at will.

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. § 125A.67, Subd. 1 (Academies’ Administrator)

Policy #: 518
Title: DNR-DNI Orders
Date of Initial Approval: 12/05/2000
Revision/Re-authorization Dates: 03-15-2018; 04-21-2021
Reviewers: MSA Superintendent; MSAB/MSAD Directors; Health Services Director

I. PURPOSE

The Minnesota State Academies (MSA) serves students with complex health needs. MSA also recognizes that staff members may be confronted with requests to withhold emergency care of a student in the event of a life-threatening situation at school or during school activities; or be presented with Do Not Resuscitate/Do Not Intubate (DNR-DNI) orders. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to MSA staff in these situations.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. The primary mission of the school district is education. DNR-DNI Orders are medical documents. MSA staff will not accept or honor requests to withhold emergency care or DNR-DNI orders.

However, MSA nursing staff will maintain a file of DNR-DNI orders and communicate them with emergency medical personnel. If possible, MSA nursing staff will send a copy of the DNR-DNI order along with the student to the medical facility. Otherwise, the nursing staff should send the DNR-DNI order to the medical facility as soon as possible.

- B. MSA staff will provide reasonable emergency care and assistance when a student is undergoing a medical emergency during school or school activities.
- C. MSA staff will activate emergency medical services (911) as soon as possible when a student is undergoing a medical emergency during school or school activities.
- D. The parent/guardian will be notified of the emergency as soon as possible.
- E. Notwithstanding this policy, IEP and Section 504 teams must comply with individualized medical emergency care plans for students when indicated in accordance with state and federal law.
- F. Parents/guardians who request that emergency care be withheld for their child or present DNR-DNI Orders shall be advised of and given a copy of this policy.

Legal References:

29 U.S.C. §794 et seq. (§504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973)
42 USCA §§12101-12213 (Americans with Disabilities Act)

Policy #: 750
Title: MN RESOURCE LIBRARIES ACQUISITION AND COLLECTION
Date of Initial Approval: 03-28-2019
Revision/Re-authorization Dates: 09-29-2021
Reviewers: MSA Librarian; MSA Superintendent; Minnesota Department of Education Blind/Visually Impaired and Deaf/Hard of Hearing Specialists

I. PURPOSE

The MN Resource Libraries (MNRL) is a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Minnesota State Academies (MSA) to provide information and resources to help families and educators meet the educational needs of Minnesota children and youth who are Blind/Visually Impaired (B/VI); Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH), or DeafBlind (DB). The purpose of the MNRL is to serve as a lending library of curriculum, assessments, printed materials, and other resources to Minnesota educators, families and children who are B/VI; D/HH; or DB. (See MN Resources Libraries link on the MSA website for additional information about resources and eligibility for patrons) The purpose of this policy is to guide the MNRL in the selection and acquisition of library materials & resources and the overall development of the library collection.

II. ACQUISITION AND COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

A. Responsibility for Acquisitions

The MDE B/VI and D/HH specialists will submit library acquisition recommendations to the MN Resource Librarian for purchase after prior approval from each respective advisory committee. The ultimate responsibility of library material selection resides with the MSA Librarian who operates within framework of this policy.

B. The MDE B/VI and D/HH specialists are responsible for generating budget submittals and processing within the MDE agency framework to fund purchases for the MNRL. After budgets are determined, the specialists will communicate with the MSA Librarian to update the budget for the MNRL.

C. Criteria for Selection

Primary criteria considered in the acquisition of library materials:

- a. Patron requests
- b. Quality, reliability, and accessibility of the content
- c. Current and permanent value
- d. Reputation of author(s) or creator(s)
- e. Popularity
- f. Diversity in viewpoints
- g. Suitability for distribution
- h. Existing library holdings
- i. Budget

D. Collection Maintenance

The MSA Librarian will maintain a current and relevant collection to serve the overall mission of the MNRL. The library will remove from its collection any outdated, inappropriate, or irrelevant materials that have little or no historical or research value, according to current library standards.

Policy #: 423
Title: EMPLOYEE-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS/FRATERNIZATION
Date of Initial Approval: 08-17-2012
Revision/Re-authorization Dates: 11-29-2012; 10-18-2017
Reviewers: MSA Human Resources; MSA Superintendent

I. PURPOSE

The Minnesota State Academies (MSA) are committed to an educational environment in which all students are treated with respect and dignity. Every MSA employee is to provide students with appropriate guidance, understanding, and direction while maintaining a standard of professionalism and acting within accepted standards of conduct. Employees must set appropriate boundaries with students and conduct themselves in a manner that will maintain a professional relationship with students at all times.

This policy is designed to protect both staff and students and to assure the safety and well-being of all MSA students and staff. Decisions regarding this policy are subject to the discretion of the Directors and the Superintendent after considering the listed issues below:

1. The student's best interests
2. The school's best interests
3. The employee's safety and liability
4. The school's liability

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. This policy applies to all MSA employees at all times, whether on or off duty and on or off of the MSA campuses. Employees are defined as the following:
1. Any individual employed by MSA, including student teachers, substitutes, interns, and practicum students.
 2. Any employees, agents, and owners/partners of contractors or agencies.
 3. Any volunteers.
- B. At all times, students will be treated by teachers and other MSA employees with respect, courtesy, and consideration and in a professional manner. Each MSA employee is expected to exercise good judgment and professionalism in all interpersonal relationships with students. Such relationships must remain on a teacher-student basis or an employee-student basis. MSA employees must be mindful of personal conduct in situations where students might be present. MSA employees must also be mindful of FERPA expectations for confidentiality and communication with parents, friends, and family members, especially with social media.
- C. Teachers and administrators must be mindful of their inherent positions of authority and influence over students. Similarly, other MSA employees also may hold positions of authority over students and must be mindful of their authority and influence over students.

- D. Employees are prohibited from engaging in any of the following types of conduct, regardless of whether the conduct occurs during or outside of school hours. The following list of prohibited conduct does not, and is not intended to, constitute the entire list of conduct for which discipline may be imposed.
1. Engaging in any romantic, sexual, or intimate relationships between MSA employees and students, without regard to the age of the student, including dating, flirting, sexual contact, inappropriate physical displays of affection, or sexually suggestive comments, regardless of whether staff or student initiates the behavior, whether the relationship is consensual, or whether the student had parent permission, and including any activity that gives the perception of such behaviors or relationships.
 2. Fostering, grooming, encouraging, or participating in inappropriate emotionally or socially intimate relationships in which the relationship is outside the boundaries of the reasonable, professional employee-student relationship and in which the relationship could reasonably cause a student to view the employee as more than an employee or any activity that gives the perception of an inappropriate relationship.
 3. Allowing any student/child to visit their home, or visiting a student/child's home, for reasons other than appropriate visits with approval by parents/legal guardians. (Other professional or educational reasons may require specific approval from the MSA Directors and/or the Superintendent)
 4. Initiating or continuing communications with students for reasons unrelated to any appropriate purpose, including oral, signed, or written communication, telephone and videophone calls, electronic communication (such as texting, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms, Facebook, or other social networking sites), webcams, or photographs. Electronic and online communications with students should be professional in their content and tone and utilize MSA-established e-mail and other classroom resources that are accessible to supervisors. (The only exceptions to this are emergency situations that may have serious safety ramifications.)
 5. Permitting any student or child to reside in their home unless they are parents, relatives, or legal guardians. For unique situations that are in the student's best interests, written permission must be obtained from the Superintendent.
 6. Making presentations of personal gifts, clothing, cash, or meals/snacks to students and/or their families unless through school-sponsored donations and approved by the Director and/or Superintendent. Employees should be cautious about participation in student fundraising, ensuring that they do not favor a particular student when purchasing items during fundraising activities.

7. Allowing any student to travel in their personal vehicle for school-related or non-school-related matters unless specific approval is given by the Directors or Superintendent to provide for the safety and care of the student.
 8. Sharing excessive personal information and or beliefs on non-school related issues (e.g., marriage, dating, sex, mental health, suicide, religion, etc.) Those issues are best handled by professional mental health providers (school counselors, school social workers, personal counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists, and so forth). Staff members may provide support for students in gathering information and resources.
 9. Providing alcohol (regardless of age) or drugs – either prescription or illegal – (except for those provided in accordance with instructions/procedures from the MSA nursing department) to students, including failing to take reasonable steps to prevent such access from occurring. This includes partaking in excessive alcohol consumption and/or illegal drug use when students are present.
 10. Accompanying a student to a non-school-related activity without parent, director, and superintendent approval.
 11. Committing or attempting to induce students to commit an illegal act or act of immoral conduct which may be harmful to others or bring discredit to MSA.
 12. Participating in excessive informal and social involvement with individual students – this is unprofessional and incompatible with appropriate employee-student relationships.
- E. MSA employees shall, whenever possible, employ safeguards against improper relationships with students and/or claims of such improper relationships. Employees need to be mindful of general standards and boundaries for teaching and working with students.

Detailed guidelines have been established in Appendix 423-B to support employees in their work with students. MSA employees who are employed outside of the academies in positions that support students (i.e., Personal Care Attendants, Daycare Providers, or Respite Care Providers) must communicate this with their supervisor so that they may be assigned to different students during their work shifts at MSA. Whenever possible, MSA administrators will establish a rotation of assignments to manage the length of time a staff member is assigned to an individual student.

[Note: Such safeguards include the following: avoiding or minimizing physical contact; keeping doors open when talking or meeting with students one-on-one; and/or making sure that such meetings with a student take place in rooms with windows and/or others nearby.]

- F. MSA employees or board members who have children or relatives attending classes at MSA must develop a plan with their supervisor (or the

superintendent) to address how the employee/board member will interact with the child, the child's teacher(s) and support staff, and supervisors (**Procedure #4300/Appendix 423-A**).

Children/relatives means any person related within the fourth degree of consanguinity (refer to chart below). Half-blood or step-relationships are defined the same as full-blood relationships.

Consanguinity (related by genetics/blood):

- 1st degree – Child
- 2nd degree – Sibling; Grandchild
- 3rd degree – Niece/Nephew; Great grandchild
- 4th degree – First cousin; grandnephew/niece

- G. Employees who have children or relatives that are students at MSA must be mindful about maintaining professional relationships with their children or relatives while at work and with their co-workers and supervisors, including consideration of the appearance of favoritism.
- H. MSA employees will adhere to applicable standards of ethics and professional conduct in Minnesota law.

III. REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION

- A. All MSA employees have a duty to report suspected violations of this policy. Any person with knowledge or suspicion of an improper relationship between employees and a student must immediately report the conduct to their supervisor, the human resources department, or the school social worker. Employees who make a good faith effort to report any suspected fraternization violation, or who cooperate with inquiries or investigations related to the accusation shall be protected from retaliation.
- B. Complaints and/or concerns regarding alleged violations of this policy shall be handled by the MSA Human Resources Department. Results of the investigation will be shared with the employee's supervisor for follow-up action. Suspected criminal activity will be referred to the local police department for investigation. Suspected child abuse must be reported under the directions outlined in MSA Policy #414.
- C. All employees shall cooperate with any investigation of alleged acts, conduct, or communications in violation of this policy.

IV. MINNESOTA STATE ACADEMIES ACTION

Upon receipt of a report, MSA will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination, or discharge. It also may include reporting to appropriate state or federal authorities, including the appropriate professional licensing authority and appropriate agencies responsible for investigating reports of maltreatment of minors and/or vulnerable adults. MSA actions in response to

violations of this policy will be consistent with requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements, state/federal laws, and MSA policies.

V. SCOPE OF LIABILITY

Employees are placed on notice that if an employee acts outside the performance of the duties of the position for which the employee is employed or is guilty of malfeasance, willful neglect of duty, or bad faith, MSA is not required to defend and indemnify the employee for damages in MSA-related litigation.

VI. EXCEPTION

If any employee feels there should be an exception to this policy, written permission must be obtained from the Superintendent.

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. § 13.43, Subd. 16 (School District or Charter School Disclosure of Violence or Inappropriate Sexual Contact)

Minn. Stat. § 122A.20, Subd 2 (Mandatory Reporting to Minnesota Board of Teaching)

Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, Subds. 5(b) and 13(b) (Mandatory immediate discharge of teachers with license revocations due to child or sex abuse convictions)

Minn. Stat. §§ 609.341-609.352 (Defining “intimate parts” and “position of authority” as well as detailing various sex offenses)

Minn. Stat. § 626.556 (Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors)

Minn. Stat. § 626.557 (Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults)

Minn. Rules Part 3512.5200 (Code of Ethics for School Administrators)

Minn. Rules Part 8700.7500 (Code of Ethics for Minnesota Teachers)

Cross References:

MSBA/MASA Policy 211 (Criminal or Civil Action against School District, School Board Member, Employee, or Student)

MSBA/MASA Policy 306 (Administrator Code of Ethics)

MSBA/MASA Policy 403 (Discipline, Suspension, and Dismissal of School District Employees)

MSBA/MASA Policy 413 (Harassment and Violence)

MSBA/MASA Policy 414 (Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect or Physical or Sexual Abuse)

MSBA/MASA Policy 415 (Mandated Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults)

MSBA/MASA Policy 421 (Gifts to Employees)

Appendices:

Appendix 423 A – Plan to address Employee-Student Familial Relationship(s)

Appendix 423 B – General Standards and Boundaries for Teaching and Working with Students.

Related Procedure:

Procedure 4300 – Employees and Board Members with Children and Relatives at MSA

Policy #: 625
Title: INCLEMENT WEATHER
Date of Initial Approval: 01-23-2014
Revision/Re-authorization Dates: 01-23-2020
Reviewers: MSA Superintendent; MSA Human Resources Office; MSA Directors and Supervisors

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to communicate expectations and processes for students and staff at Minnesota State Academies (MSA) during inclement weather events and to ensure the safety of both students and staff. This policy also sets forth expectations for providing adequate direct and support services for students.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Since the Minnesota State Academies are not fully subject to weather emergencies declared by the Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) office, especially when students are campus, determinations regarding student coverage, program needs, and staffing expectations are determined on a case-by-case basis.

MSA provides continuous operations and are specifically exempt from declared weather emergencies. The superintendent and/or the on-call supervisor are responsible for making those determinations and communicating decisions with students, staff, and families, following procedures set forth in MSA Policy# 806 – Crisis Management. If the superintendent and/or the on-call supervisor determines that it is necessary to close school, following weather emergencies declared by the MMB and/or the governor, necessary arrangements will be made as outlined below.

III. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Employees scheduled for work are responsible to provide their own transportation to/from work and are responsible to make a reasonable and prudent effort to arrive at their job site on time for their shift.
- B. Employees who are unable to report for work or may arrive late due to severe weather conditions should use the usual call-in procedure and may request vacation leave, use of compensatory time, or unpaid leave (**MSA Procedure #4004**). It is up to supervisors' discretion to approve or deny leave requests.
- C. When a determination of severe weather conditions has been made by the superintendent, meals and sleeping accommodations for employees who may not be able to make it home after their work shifts may be authorized.
- D. Employees reporting for work as scheduled shall report to their regularly scheduled area, but may be reassigned to carry out priority functions.
- E. In the event of staff shortages, employees may be required to remain on duty until adequate staffing is available.
- F. Employees are expected to remain on duty during scheduled work shifts unless specifically excused by the school administration and may be required to remain on duty past scheduled shifts until adequate staff is available.
- G. Staff are responsible to ensure students who travel outdoors in winter weather are dressed appropriately for existing conditions.

IV. SCHOOL CLOSINGS / STUDENT TRAVEL TO MSA

- A. As weather conditions vary greatly across the state of Minnesota, school districts or bus companies transporting students to MSA are responsible for making decisions regarding safe travel to Faribault.
- B. School districts or bus companies that determine weather conditions exist which are unsafe for travel shall call the on-call supervisor at [507-339-1270](tel:507-339-1270) or the front office of each campus (weekdays only) and leave a message to communicate plans for transporting students. (i.e. adjusted drop-off times/dates)
- C. The on-call supervisor will inform appropriate employees of changes in student's travel plans.
- D. In the case of a significant decrease in students returning to MSA, the on-call supervisor will work with supervisors to adjust staffing levels to reflect the needs of students. Every attempt will be made to contact staff prior to their reporting to work.
- E. If inclement weather conditions exist in Faribault on a day that students are scheduled to return, the superintendent may close the Academies until safe weather conditions return. If the superintendent is unavailable, the on-call person will be solely responsible for the closure decision.
- F. In case of school closure, announcements will be go out to parents informing them of the decision. Announcements will also be shared on the MSA websites and Facebook pages and/or parent/employee notification systems utilized by MSA. Once a decision is made to close, the on-call supervisor is responsible for ensuring bus companies and parents are contacted and notified of the closure. The on-call supervisor may utilize employees and supervisors to assist with this process.
- G. In case of school closure, employees will also be notified. Essential employees necessary to maintain the safety and essential functions of the campuses will continue to be scheduled to work. (The work may be performed on campus or at alternate work sites as approved through MSA Policy #456 – Teleworking). Non-essential employees will not be scheduled to work and may request vacation leave, use of compensatory time, or unpaid leave (MSA Procedure #4004) for use during days when school is closed. If applicable, employees may be authorized for emergency pay as approved by the MMB in extreme weather incidents. The superintendent and/or the on-call supervisor will determine who are essential employees in the event of school closures and will communicate directly with those employees.

V. STUDENT TRAVEL FROM MSA ON WEEKENDS

- A. Inclement weather conditions will be monitored by the Superintendent and/or the on-call supervisor. If inclement conditions are expected on the day that students are expected to leave MSA to go home, MSA administrators will work with students' home school districts to determine the safest way to transport students home. Students may need to be picked up a bit earlier than their usual pick-up/drop-off times or on a different day. School districts/transportation companies responsible for picking up students maintain responsibility for notifying parents of alternate travel schedules. If possible, the superintendent or on-call supervisor will make this decision by 10 a.m. on the day of travel and notify districts/transportation companies and parents.

- B. If inclement weather conditions exist which prevent school districts and parents from picking up students on their departure day, arrangements will be made for students to stay on campus. Once weather conditions improve, students will be expected to go home, if reasonable.

VI. DAY STUDENTS

- A. When district transportation of a day student is not provided or the parent determines travel to MSA is unsafe due to weather conditions, the student is excused. If parents choose to provide their own transportation in lieu of district transportation, they must communicate with the department secretary to ensure plans are in place for staffing and supervision. **Schedules and educational activities may be adjusted on those days based on the number of students attending classes, available staffing/resources, and other factors. Principals will make decisions as appropriate to ensure that educational activities are provided to the extent possible.**
- B. Parents are required to **communicate alternate** plans for the student in case of inclement weather (**i.e., alternate drop-off locations, authorized persons to pick up students**). The department secretary must keep a record of all authorizations and follow directives during inclement weather incidents.
- C. When area schools are closed/closing, MSA will coordinate day student transportation needs with local districts and/or parents. Parents may pick up their children early and/or keep their children home if they feel the weather is becoming too severe for safe travel.
- D. Campus Directors will contact the directors of student life, student nutrition and health services in the event a day student is unable to return home.

VII. STUDENT SAFETY AT MSA

- A. Every effort will be made to ensure student safety during inclement weather while students are attending school. If it becomes necessary for students to travel outdoors, appropriate clothing will be monitored along with close supervision of students to ensure safety. As appropriate, buses will be provided to transport students between buildings (**i.e. sub-zero weather, high wind chill factors**).
- B. Transportation between the MSAB/MSAD campuses may be canceled if students cannot be transported safely on city streets. Campus directors will communicate any schedule changes with parents as appropriate.

Policy #: 740
Title: SPECIAL EXPENSES/OUTSTATE TRAVEL
Date of Initial Approval: 05-03-2007
Revision/Re-authorization Dates: 11-21-2013; 01-23-2014; 03-24-2016; 08-15-2019; 02-23-2022
Reviewers: MSA Director of Fiscal Services; MSA Superintendent

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to reimburse employees for special expenses incurred in connection with assigned official duties of a state employee which are not reimbursable through the regular expense regulations.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

It is the policy of the Minnesota State Academies (MSA) to pay for approved special expenses. All expenses to be reimbursed must be pre-approved by supervisors.

Note: Refreshments or meals may not be provided for meetings consisting of a majority of state employees. This includes ad hoc meetings or staff meetings, whether held periodically or on an on-call basis. Exceptions are listed in Section E below.

Special expenses include reasonable costs for the following:

- A. Full cost of a meal when it is a part of the structured agenda of a conference, workshop, seminar, or meeting which the Appointing Authority has authorized the employee to attend (this does not include routine staff meetings).
- B. Registration and tuition fees for conferences, seminars, workshops, or education courses.
- C. Refreshments for department-sponsored meetings, conferences, or workshops where the majority of participants are not state employees.
- D. Refreshments, meals, and other conference costs for department-sponsored events where registration fees are charged, and the majority of the participants are not state employees.
- E. Refreshments and/or meals for meetings that consist primarily of state employees when the refreshments and/or meals are an integral part of the event and are necessary to sustain the flow of the meeting and to retain the captive audience, and if the meeting is one of the following:
 - 1. A meeting with participants from many geographic locations where the majority of the participants are in travel status.
 - 2. A department-wide annual/quarterly staff meeting for all employees.
 - 3. A department senior management/cabinet planning or organizational meeting.
 - 4. A department-wide annual/quarterly staff meeting for all managers.
 - 5. An annual/quarterly staff meeting of all employees.
 - 6. A structured training session, available to employees generally and conducted by persons outside the agency, provided it has been approved by the agency training or staff development office.

With the exception of structured training sessions, the meetings described shall be held no more frequently than one each quarter. All meetings shall be scheduled to minimize the inclusion of meals.

- F. Refreshments and/or meals may be provided during official meetings of statutory boards, councils, task forces, advisory committees, and commissions; and during official meetings of external non-statutory councils, task forces, advisory committees, and commissions for which expenses are authorized by statute or as a condition of a federal grant or contract. Official meetings include meetings of subcommittees provided that such meetings are authorized by the full board, council, task force, advisory committee, or commission. All meetings shall be scheduled to minimize the inclusion of meals.
- G. Lodging:
 - 1. when weather conditions or other unforeseen occurrences prevent the employee from returning home; or,
 - 2. if the appointing authority authorizes overnight participation in an approved event (authorization should be based on the benefit of such participation to the state).
- H. Expense reimbursement for lodging, travel, and meals for one attendant for an employee with a disability who requires daily assistance in performing various personal tasks or who has special mobility needs.
- I. Expenses as follows for employees assigned to work at the State Fair if MSA chooses to participate.
 - 1. Fees for admission to the fairgrounds, unless previously provided.
 - 2. One meal during each shift of fewer than ten (10) hours or two (2) meals during each shift of ten (10) hours or more, subject to the meal amounts for in-state travel in collective bargaining agreement or plan.
 - 3. For employees who report for work directly to the State Fair and/or return home directly from the State Fair, reimbursement for mileage for each trip is limited to the lesser of the mileage between their home and the State Fair or between their permanent work station and the State Fair as per Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) policy and the appropriate collective bargaining agreement.
 - 4. Taxi fare for employees with a disability who are unable to drive or use other means of public transportation between their normal workstation and fairgrounds or between the employee's residence and the fairgrounds, whichever distance is less.
- J. All airline and lodging reservations need to be made by Fiscal Services and billed to Minnesota State Academies.
- K. Out-of-State Travel: All Out-of-State Travel must be approved by the Superintendent **and the MSA Board.**
- L. Expense reimbursement for international travel which exceeds the limits for out-of-state travel authorized in collective bargaining agreements.

Note: All international travel must be approved through the Superintendent's Office **and be approved by both the MSA Board and the Commissioner of the Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB)**. Reimbursement limits for international travel will be the same as out-of-state travel provisions contained in the appropriate collective bargaining agreement or plan, unless the special expense exceeding the limits has received prior approval of the Appointing Authority and from the Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB). [Appendix 740-B]

M. Expenses as follows for individual employee awards and MSA recognition events:

Note: Length of Service awards as found in the appropriate category in the State and MSA Length of Service contracts are not special expenses and are not subject to this policy.

1. Recognition awards at the discretion of the Appointing Authority. Awards for individual or group achievements which are limited to noncash/nonnegotiable items of nominal value (\$50 or less.)
2. Funds in state accounts may not be used to purchase meals/refreshments for agency employees at MSA recognition events.

N. Other expenses authorized by the Appointing Authority and approved in advance by the Commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB).

1. An approved Request to Incur Special Expense Form must accompany individual Employee Expense Reports requesting department reimbursement for these special expenses and/or any invoices for such expenses to be paid directly by the department. In addition, a copy of each request must be forwarded to the MSA Director of Fiscal Services for monitoring/reporting purposes as required.
2. Requests received after the event or too late to provide a proper review must include an explanation of why the request was not provided in a timely manner.

Note: If an Out-of-State Travel Authorization (NA-00100-06) identifies the special expense for tuition and registration fees, that form may be used in lieu of the Request for Approval of Special Expenses (PE-00668-01)

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. § 43A.04, Subd. 4 (General Information)
MMB administrative procedure 4.4 – Special Expenses

Appendices:

Appendix 740A - Request for Approval of Special Expenses Form (PE-00668-01)
Appendix 740B - Out-of-State Travel Authorization Form (NA-00100-06)

Policy #: 451
Title: APPROPRIATE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
Date of Initial Approval: 11/16/2017
Revision/Re-authorization Dates: 06/02/2021
Reviewers: MSA Superintendent; MSA Instructional Leadership Team; MSA Human Resources

I. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Minnesota State Academies (MSA) face the challenge of balancing the secure use of social media to enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange for the greater MSA community with the need to protect the privacy of our students as well as protecting the ability of employees to freely express themselves.

This policy establishes MSA’s position on the utility and management of social media and provides guidance on the management, administration, and oversight. This policy is not intended to address one particular form of social media, but rather social media in general, as advances in technology will occur and new tools/platforms will emerge. This policy governs the appropriate use of social media at all times, including both work and non-work time, by MSA employees, consultants, and contractors.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Social media provides a ~~new and potentially~~ valuable means of assisting MSA and its employees in meeting community outreach, communication, collaboration, and information exchange with parents, students, and community members. This policy identifies potential uses that may be explored or expanded upon as deemed reasonable by the Superintendent and Directors of MSA.

MSA also recognizes the role that these tools play in the personal lives of some employees and that the personal use of social media can have bearing on employees in their official capacity. As such, this policy provides information of a precautionary nature as well as prohibitions on the use of social media by MSA employees.

III. DEFINITIONS

- *Blog/Vlog*: A self-published diary or commentary on a particular topic that may allow visitors to post responses, reactions, or comments. The term is short for “Web log”. Vlog refers to Blogs that are published via video (commonly used by deaf people instead of sharing information via printed media)
- *Page*: The specific portion of a social media website where content is displayed, and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights
- *Post*: Content an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.
- *Profile*: Information that a user provides about themselves on a social networking site.
- *Social Media*: A category of Internet-based resources that integrate user-generated content and user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites (~~Facebook, MySpace~~); micro-blogging sites (~~Twitter, Nixle~~), photo- and video-sharing sites (~~Flickr, YouTube, Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok~~), wikis (~~Wikipedia~~), blogs/vlogs, and news sites (~~Digg, Reddit~~).
- *Social Networks*: Online platforms where users can create profiles, share information, and socialize with others using a range of technologies.

- *Speech*: Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words/sign language, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videos, or related forms of communication.
- *Web 2.0*: The second generation of the World Wide Web focused on shareable, user-generated content, rather than static web pages. Some use this term interchangeably with social media.
- *Wiki*: Web page(s) that can be edited collaboratively.

IV. ON-THE-JOB USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

A. MSA-Approved Social Media: Guiding Principles

1. When possible, each social media page shall include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and scope of MSA's presence on that site.
2. When possible, the page/post should link to MSA's official websites.
3. Social Media pages/posts should be developed/written for the target audience (such as families, students, or other community members)
4. MSA employees who are assigned the responsibility of representing MSA on social media outlets should ensure accessibility of those pages/posts (audio description, captions, voice-over, ASL, etc. as appropriate).
5. The traditional communication rules of reasonableness, respect, courtesy and common sense, and legal requirements also apply to social media outlets.

B. Procedures

1. All MSA social media sites or pages shall be approved by the MSA **superintendent-Instructional Leadership Team** and shall be administrated by designees selected by the MSA superintendent and/or Directors of the Academies. **The Director of Curriculum and Educational Programs will maintain a list of current social media platforms used by MSA and oversee authorized personnel who maintain those sites/pages. Guidelines and timelines for social media content will be incorporated into position descriptions for staff and extracurricular activity personnel.**
2. Social media sites (where possible) shall clearly indicate that they are maintained by MSA and shall have MSA contact information prominently displayed.
3. Social media content shall adhere to applicable laws, regulations, and policies, including all privacy requirements for students and all information technology and records management policies. Social media content must also adhere to MSA's website/social media accessibility policy. (MSA Policy #103) Individuals managing MSA social media outlets must maintain a list of student permission forms regarding media releases and privacy expectations.
4. When possible, social media posts should state that the opinions expressed by visitors to the page(s) do not reflect the opinions of the Academies.
 - a. Pages shall clearly indicate that posted comments will be monitored and that the Academies reserve the right to remove obscenities, off-topic comments, and personal attacks.

- b. Pages shall clearly indicate that any content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure.

C. MSA-Sanctioned Use

1. MSA employees representing the Academies via social media outlets shall follow the guidelines below:
 - a. Conduct themselves at all times as representatives of MSA and, accordingly, adhere to all MSA standards for conduct, and observe conventionally accepted protocols and proper decorum.
 - b. Identify themselves as an employee of MSA
 - c. Maintain confidentiality, following expectations outlined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
 - d. Utilize department computers and/or mobile devices to manage MSA social media activities.
2. Potential Uses of Social Media
 - a. Community Outreach and engagement by:
 - i. Providing tips related to education and language development
 - ii. Offering opportunities for communication with school administration
 - iii. Sharing information and announcements about upcoming events open to the community/parents
 - iv. Soliciting input and feedback about school-related projects and/or policies
 - b. Time-sensitive notifications related to:
 - i. Transportation changes and updates
 - ii. Weather emergencies
 - iii. Security and Safety of students
 - iv. Special events, including last-minute scheduling changes
 - c. Recruitment of potential employees or volunteers
 - i. Information about current programs
 - ii. Information about current vacancies
 - iii. Opportunities for volunteers
 - d. Information sharing with potential students and their families
 - i. Information about school programs and extracurricular activities
 - ii. Information about successful students and alumni
 - iii. Family/School events at the Academies
 - iv. Contact persons for questions about the Academies

V. **PERSONAL USE:** Precautions and Prohibitions

Barring state law or binding employment contracts to the contrary, MSA employees should be aware of the following considerations and take precautions when using social media.

- A. MSA employees are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites but are encouraged to take care that their speech does not impair their positive working relationships with other employees, parents, families, and students at MSA. Examples of sensitive situations may include the following: Situations in which

confidentiality is important; Opinions that may exclude or offend minority groups at work; Comments about co-workers that may impair discipline and harmony among co-workers; or Comments that may negatively affect the public perception of the Academies.

- B. As public employees, MSA employees are cautioned that speech on- or off-duty, made pursuant to their official duties – that is, that owes its existence to the employee’s professional duties and responsibilities – is not protected speech under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline if their speech is determined to be a violation of policies of the Minnesota State Academies. MSA employees should assume that their speech and related activities on social media sites will reflect upon their position and MSA. Employees must also maintain confidentiality, following expectations outlined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
- C. MSA employees shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate any information to which they have access as a result of their employment without authorization from the Superintendent or the Directors of the Academies.
- D. When using social media, MSA employees should be mindful that their speech becomes part of the worldwide electronic domain. Therefore, adherence to MSA’s code of conduct is expected in the personal use of social media. In particular, MSA employees should be mindful of the impact of their comments on students and families, particularly with speech containing obscene or sexually explicit language, images or acts; or statements or other forms of speech that ridicule, malign, disparage, or otherwise express bias against any race, any religion, or any protected class of individuals. Employees also should take caution about speech involving themselves or other employees that reflect behavior that may be reasonably considered as reckless or irresponsible.
- E. MSA employees may not divulge information gained by reason of their authority; make any statements, speeches, appearances, and endorsements; or publish materials that could be reasonably considered to represent the views or positions of the Minnesota State Academies without express authorization. **This includes pictures, videos, and other content created during work time.**
- F. MSA employees should be aware that privacy settings and social media sites are constantly in flux and they should never assume that personal information posted on such sites is protected.
- G. MSA employees should expect that any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by MSA at any time without prior notice.
- H. MSA employees are prohibited from utilizing work time to access/manage their personal social media sites without express authorization. When using MSA’s computer systems, use of social media for business purposes is allowed, but personal use of social media networks or personal blogging of online content may result in disciplinary action.

VI. REPORTING VIOLATIONS

Any employee becoming aware of or having knowledge of a posting or any website/webpage/**social media post** in violation of the provisions of this policy shall notify their supervisor immediately for follow-up action.

Policy #: 520
Title: PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH PROJECTS AND STUDENT SURVEYS
Date of Initial Approval: 06-12-2018
Revision/Re-authorization Dates: 04-21-2021
Reviewers: MSAB Director; MSAD Director; MSA Director of Student Support Services

I. PURPOSE

Occasionally, the Minnesota State Academies may wish to utilize surveys to obtain opinions, feedback, and/or collect information about students. MSA also participates in some research studies which may incorporate surveys and/or other means of gathering information. The purpose of this policy is to establish the parameters of information that may be sought in student surveys.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Student surveys and research projects must be approved by the Superintendent based on recommendations from the Directors (Instructional Leadership Team). Surveys, analyses, and evaluations conducted as part of any program funded through the U.S. Department of Education must comply with 20 United States Code section 1232h.

III. STUDENT SURVEYS IN GENERAL

- A. Student surveys will be conducted anonymously and in an indiscernible fashion. No mechanism will be used for identifying the participating student in any way. No attempt will be made in any way to identify a student survey participant. No requirement that the student return the survey shall exist, and no record of the student's returning a survey will be maintained.
- B. The superintendent may choose not to approve any survey that seeks probing personal and/or sensitive information that could result in identifying the survey participant, or is discriminatory in nature based on age, race, color, sex, disability, religion, or national origin.
- C. Surveys containing questions pertaining to the student's or the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) personal beliefs or practices in sex, family life, morality, and religion will not be administered to any student unless the parent or guardian of the student is notified in writing that such survey is to be administered and the parent or guardian of the student gives written permission for the student to participate or has the opportunity to opt out of the survey depending upon how the survey is funded. Any and all documents containing the written permission of a parent for a student to participate in a survey will be maintained by the school district in a file separate from the survey responses.
- D. Although the survey is conducted anonymously, potential exists for personally identifiable information to be provided in response thereto. To the extent that personally identifiable information of a student is contained in his or her

responses to a survey, the school district will take appropriate steps to ensure the data is protected in accordance with Minnesota Statutes chapter Minn. Stat. Ch. 13 (Minnesota Government Data Practices Act), 20 United States Code section U.S.C. § 1232g (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and 34 Code of Federal Regulations C.F.R. Part 99

- E. MSA will not impose an academic or other penalty on a student who opts out of participating in a student survey.
- F. During events hosted by other organizations or agencies, MSA employees must ensure that students do not participate in surveys or research projects without obtaining parental permission. Students who have reached the age of majority may participate in those surveys.

IV. STUDENT SURVEYS CONDUCTED AS PART OF DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PROGRAM AND/OR RESEARCH PROJECTS

- A. All instructional materials, including teacher's manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material which will be used in connection with any survey, analysis, or evaluation as part of any program funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education, shall be available for inspection by the parents or guardians of the students. Research Projects that involve surveying and/or collection of information from students must include parental permission prior to implementation of the project.
- B. No student shall be required, as part of any program funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education, without the prior consent of the student (if the student is an adult or emancipated minor), or in the case of an unemancipated minor, without the prior written consent of the parent, to submit to a survey that reveals information concerning:
 - i. political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
 - ii. mental and psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
 - iii. sex behavior or attitudes;
 - iv. illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
 - v. critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
 - vi. legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
 - vii. religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parent/guardian; or
 - viii. income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).
- C. As part of this policy, MSA has established the following expectations for surveys approved by the Department of Education and/or University research projects.
 - a. MSA will ensure the right of a parent to inspect, on request, a survey, including an evaluation, created by a third party before the survey is

administered or distributed by a school to a student, including procedures for granting a parent's request for reasonable access to such survey within a reasonable period of time after the request is received.

"Parent" means a legal guardian or another person acting in loco parentis (in place of a parent), such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the welfare of the child.

- b. Arrangements to protect student privacy in the event of the administration or distribution of a survey, including an evaluation, to a student which contains one or more of the items listed above, including the right of a parent of a student to inspect, on request, any such survey.

- c. MSA will ensure the right of a parent of a student to inspect, on request, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for the student and procedures for granting a request by a parent for such access within a reasonable period of time after the request is received.

"Instructional material" means instructional content that is provided to a student, regardless of format, including printed or representational materials, audio-visual materials, and materials in electronic or digital formats (i.e., materials accessible through the Internet). The term does not include academic tests or academic assessments.

- d. Surveys and/or research projects will not include administration of physical examinations or screenings that MSA may administer to a student. This provision does not apply to a survey administered to a student in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 United States Code 1400, et seq.).

- e. MSA will not collect, disclose, or use personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information (or otherwise providing the information to others for that purpose) including arrangements to protect student privacy that are provided by the school district in the event of such collection, disclosure, or use.

- i. "Personal information" means individually identifiable information including a student or parent's first and last name; a home or other physical address (including street name and the name of the city or town); a telephone number; or a Social Security identification number.

- ii. This provision does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions, such as:

- college or other postsecondary education recruitment or military;

- book clubs, magazines, and programs providing access to low-cost literary products;
 - curriculum and instructional materials used by elementary and secondary schools;
 - tests and assessments used by elementary schools and secondary schools to provide cognitive, evaluative, diagnostic, clinical, aptitude, or achievement information about students, or to generate other statistically useful data for the purpose of securing such tests and assessments and the subsequent analysis and public release of the aggregate data from such tests and assessments.
 - the sale by students of products or services to raise funds for school-related or education-related activities; and
 - student recognition programs
- f. The right of a parent to inspect, on request, any instrument used in the collection of information, as described above, before the instrument is administered or distributed to a student and procedures for granting a request by a parent for reasonable access to such an instrument within a reasonable period of time after the request is received.

V. NOTICE

- A. This policy serves as reasonable notice of the adoption or continued use of surveys and/or research to parents of students enrolled in or served by MSA.
1. If there is any substantive change in this policy, the updated policy will be posted on the MSA website for parents to review.
 2. The notice will provide parents with an opportunity to opt out of participation in the survey or research project. The notice provisions shall not be construed to preempt applicable provisions of state law that require parental notification and do not apply to any physical examination or screening that is permitted or required by applicable state law, including physical examinations or screenings that are permitted without parental notification.

Parents may opt out of participation in the following activities:

- Activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information, or otherwise providing that information to others for that purpose.
- The administration of any third-party survey (non-Department of Education funded) that contains one or more of the items described above.
- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school and scheduled by the school in advance, and not necessary

to protect the immediate health and safety of the student or other students.

“Invasive physical examination” means any medical examination that involves the exposure of private body parts, or act during such examination that includes incision, insertion, or injection into the body, but does not include a hearing, vision, or scoliosis screening.

- B. MSA must inform parents at the beginning of the school year if specific or approximate dates for administering surveys and/or research have been identified and give parents reasonable notice of planned surveys scheduled after the start of the school year. MSA must give parents direct, timely notice when their students are scheduled to participate in a student survey and offer the option of opting out of such surveys/research. **The opportunity to review the survey and make decisions must be provided to parents.**

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. Ch. 13 (Minnesota Government Data Practices Act)

Minn. Stat. § 121A.065 (District Surveys to Collect Student Information; Parent Notice and Opportunity for Opting Out)

20 U.S.C. § 1232g (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)

20 U.S.C. § 1232h (Protection of Pupil Rights)

34 C.F.R. § 99 (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations)

Gonzaga University v. Doe, 536 U.S. 273, (2002)

C.N. v. Ridgewood Bd. of Educ., 430 F.3d. 159 (3rd Cir. 2005)

Fields v. Palmdale School Dist., 427 F.3d. 1197 (9th Cir. 2005)

Policy #: 742
Title: IMPREST FUND
Date of Initial Approval: 11-27-2007
Revision/Re-authorization Dates: 01-25-2011; 03-07-2013; 01-23-2014; 08-23-2018; 02-23-2022
Reviewers: MSA Fiscal Services Director; MSA Superintendent

I. POLICY

The Imprest Fund will be established and maintained as authorized by Minnesota Statutes, section 15.191 and is subject to Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) and MMB policy 0606-01.1; 0606-01.2, and 0606-01.3

The Imprest Fund shall be established at a level not to exceed \$2,500.00 for the Minnesota Academy for the Deaf and \$1,600.00 for the Minnesota Academy for the Blind.

The Imprest Fund shall only be used to satisfy obligations when one of the following criteria is met:

- A. The item or services purchased is an authorized and appropriate use of state money,
OR
The program has the authority to purchase the item or service through authority for local purchase (ALP) or existing state contracts or agreements.
- B. When the vendor/supplier will not accept a Minnesota Department Purchase Order or Purchasing Card.
- C. When an emergency situation exists, and payment is required by the vendor/supplier before or at the time of the transaction.
- D. Employee meals, activity costs (movie tickets, etc.) when accompanying an individual on required events. This is only allowed when employee cannot be reimbursed through petty cash (Refer to MSA Policy #743). Employee meals cannot exceed contract amounts.
- E. The amount per check is limited to an amount that shall not cause an overdraft.
- F. In the event that employees require an advance payment for a required event, they will be required to do the following:
 - a. The MSA Field Trip Form will be completed and approved by the appropriate parties.
 - b. There will be a breakdown of the required advance.
 - c. Receipts will be turned into the **Fiscal Services** Office within 1 business day of the end of the scheduled event with the remaining dollars re-deposited.

The Imprest Fund shall not be used for the following purchases:

- 1. Gasoline
- 2. Services requiring an IRS form 1099
- 3. Alcohol or Tobacco Products
- 4. Fixed Assets
- 5. Explosives or Weapons
- 6. Employee expense accounts which should be paid through payroll
- 7. Monthly disbursements which should be paid through Accounts Payable

Checks written from the Imprest Fund will require an authorized signature. Checks must not be signed in advance, before specific expenditures are approved. Unused blank checks must be stored in a secure area, with access limited to an authorized signer.

Bank signature cards must be updated immediately upon termination of an employee who is an authorized signer of an MSA Imprest cash account.

II. DEFINITIONS

Support: The resources and individual strategies necessary to promote the development, education, interests, and personal well-being of individuals choosing the Minnesota State Academies.

III. PROCEDURE

MSA shall designate up to three persons to be an authorized signer for the Imprest Fund. MSA's **Fiscal Services** Office shall be held responsible for the accountability of the expenditures for their purchaser.

The appropriate staff or authorized signer shall:

1. Fill in the check with the date, payee and the exact amount of the purchase.
2. Document a brief description of transaction on memo line.
3. Record information on the check register.
4. Obtain an invoice or receipt from the vendor/payee.
5. Record the check number on the receipt.
6. Submit a receipt/invoice support for each expenditure that is made for the fund.

IV. RECEIVING PROCEDURES

Another employee, not involved in the purchase, shall verify acceptance of the goods by signing the vendor's invoice with their name and date of receipt to document their acceptance and verification of the goods or services.

The receipt/invoices shall be filed and secured until submitted for reimbursement of the Imprest Fund, as these are the source documents vital for Imprest Fund reimbursement and state accounting.

The Imprest Fund Accounting System should be updated with the final transaction information.

Out of State Travel:

Staff: Nichelle Steffen and Hope Miller

Dates: 07/07/25-07/11/25

Activity: Professional Development – Conference

Event: 2025 National Student Life for DHH Conference, St. Augustine, FL

Justification: Residential Life for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students is a unique and specialized field. This conference offers invaluable opportunities for professional growth and development. It provides access to the latest research, trends, and advancements within the field, ensuring we stay abreast with changing dynamics in education and Deaf/Hard of Hearing services. Networking with peers, experts, and thought leaders allows for knowledge exchange, potential collaborations, and insights that may not be accessible through traditional channels. Overall, attending this event fosters personal and professional advancement, ultimately contributing to the ongoing success and innovation in the MSA Residential program.

Estimated expenses (for 2 people):

- Fare (roundtrip): \$1000
- Lodging: \$0
- Meals: \$216
- Registration: \$600
- Other: \$0
- **Total: \$1,816**

MASD Students: Senior Trip for 8 students and staff (Michele Heise, Lee Jones, and possibly two paraprofessionals, depending on student need)

Dates: 05/22/25

Activity: Field Trip

Event: Annual MSAD Senior Sneak Day, Wisconsin Dells, WI

Justification: This is an annual tradition for the MSAD senior class and their final outing before graduation.

Estimated Expenses:

- Meals: \$150 for 2 staff, or \$300 for four staff (including paraprofessionals)
- Activity fees: \$70 for 2 staff, or \$140 for four staff (including paraprofessionals)
- Gas: \$300 roundtrip
- **Total: \$420 - \$640**



River Bend

NATURE CENTER

1000 Rustad Rd • PO Box 186
Faribault, Minnesota 55021
507.332.7151 • www.rbnc.org

Dear Minnesota State Academies for the Deaf and Blind,

Thank you so much to Lance Hall and the Academies for your work over the last nearly two years participating in our “Nature Everywhere” cross section working group.

In 2022, the National League of Cities and the Children & Nature Network selected Faribault as one of 19 cities across America to receive the designation of a Nature Everywhere Community. This designation was earned due to our community’s commitment to build better access to nature for everyone in Faribault regardless of their backgrounds and abilities.

Over the last two years, MSAD/B has been on a development team with staff from the National League of Cities, River Bend Nature Center, the City of Faribault Parks & Recreation Department and Somali Community Resettlement Services. Together, we led community engagement efforts and conducted research towards the end of development a Youth and Family Outdoor Bill of Rights for our region.

The document attached is a visionary statement of where and how we would like to see our youth service providers, green space managers, and educators work together in the future to build better pathways towards meaningful, lifelong, connections to nature in our community.

It’s our hope that the Minnesota State Academies for the Deaf and Blind’s board of directors would pass a resolution supporting the attached document. As noted in the document, it’s our hope that we can establish a permanent cross sectional team from schools, parks, community organizations and more than can continue to come together to plan inclusive and accessible nature and recreational activities for everyone in Faribault.

Thank you again for your support and in particular to Lance for his hard work.

Brad Bourn
River Bend Nature Center Executive Director
Nature Everywhere Team Lead

Children & Family Outdoor Bill of Rights

March, 2025

Developed by



River Bend
NATURE CENTER



**MINNESOTA STATE ACADEMIES
FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND**



SOMALI COMMUNITY
RESETTLEMENT SERVICES



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HOW WE GOT HERE



Southern Minnesota has always been renowned for its natural resources and we want to ensure that current and future generations of Southern Minnesotans, particularly those in and around Faribault have opportunities to build lifelong connections to nature and experience the multitude of health, wellness, developmental, and academic benefits that being grounded in nature provides.

Over the last three years, The City of Faribault, Rice County, River Bend Nature Center, and others all conducted extensive community outreach to better understand how folks in our community connect with nature, what barriers exist to improving those connections, and how best to overcome them.

HOW WE GOT HERE

The primary studies and outreach efforts that informed this work include:

- 1) [City of Faribault Community Survey \(2024\)](https://www.ci.faribault.mn.us/DocumentCenter/View/11007/The-NCS-Report---Faribault-MN-2024) <https://www.ci.faribault.mn.us/DocumentCenter/View/11007/The-NCS-Report---Faribault-MN-2024>
- 2) [River Bend Nature Center Strategic Plan Survey \(2023\)](https://rbnc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Strategic-Plan-Final-Report-2024.pdf) <https://rbnc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Strategic-Plan-Final-Report-2024.pdf>
- 3) [Outdoor Interests & Barriers Faced by People with Challenges to Independence or Social Isolation: Recommendations for Decision Makers 2023](https://irp.cdn-website.com/2c41a412/files/uploaded/River_Bend_Outdoor-Interests-Barriers-Report.pdf) [https://irp.cdn-website.com/2c41a412/files/uploaded/River Bend Outdoor-Interests-Barriers-Report.pdf](https://irp.cdn-website.com/2c41a412/files/uploaded/River_Bend_Outdoor-Interests-Barriers-Report.pdf)
- 4) [City of Faribault Journey to 2040 Parks and Trails & Open Space Plan \(2019\)](https://www.ci.faribault.mn.us/605/Journey-to-2040) <https://www.ci.faribault.mn.us/605/Journey-to-2040> or more specifically <https://www.ci.faribault.mn.us/DocumentCenter/View/6596/PTOS-Full>
- 5) [Rice County Park System Plan \(2022\)](#)



While each entity conducted their own research and outreach that is shaping their work, some themes became very clear:

1. **People in and around Faribault consistently rate having access to nature and the outdoors as one of their most important priorities.**
2. **While the Faribault region boasts some of the highest quality natural resource and green space amenities in Southern Minnesota, There are gaps in both the location of public green spaces and programs that connect or expose youth and families to nature and those gaps often overlap with other wealth and demographic gaps in the community.**
3. **Faribault has a regionally unique population making a “one-size-fits-all approach difficult. We are home to residents whose families have lived in Faribault for generations, new immigrants from across the globe, and is a hub of Minnesota’s Deaf and Blind communities. Incomes and backgrounds are equally wide-ranging from small family farmers to executives of worldwide corporations.**
4. **Public investments in green space and natural resources tend to enjoy broad public support.**
5. **Many service providers and community partners in the region all share similar long term strategies and goals to either increase the amount of public green space in the region or increase programming designed to remove barriers to accessing nature.**
6. **Because of the complex tapestry of green space and service providers, Community members can get “lost in the shuffle” when trying to help their family members engage in nature.**
7. **There is greater opportunity for community partners to achieve common goals around nature access through increased/improved collaboration.**

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The community has clearly said that improving access to nature is one of our highest common priorities. The City of Faribault, River Bend Nature Center, Somali Community Resettlement Services and the Minnesota Academies for the Deaf and Blind formed a coalition with support from the National League of Cities and the Children and Nature Network to develop a framework “Outdoor Bill of Rights” to codify experiences that community members, culturally specific partners, along with nature and recreation experts feel are essential to help ground current and future youth and families to the outdoors to build lifelong connections with, care for, and curiosity about nature.

We believe an Outdoor Bill of Rights for our community can help guide the work of the many education, nature, recreation, and community service providers in our region to promote and foster:

- Access to welcoming and inclusive outdoor spaces including adaptive and culturally specific experiences
- A sense of community responsibility and caring of public lands and resources in current and future generations
- Ability to breathe clean air, drink and enjoy clean water
- Connections and a sense of belonging to the outdoors
- Opportunities to learn and engage in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math through environmental education.



OUTDOOR BILL OF RIGHTS VISION STATEMENT

Community members, public entities, and community service organizations in around Faribault collectively envision creating an inclusive community where everyone, especially youth and communities who’ve traditionally not experienced the outdoors, have opportunities to engage with nature, regardless of ability, background, or circumstance, with accommodations in place to ensure full participation for all.

We know that exploring, playing, and experiencing the outdoors in childhood leads to better physical and mental health, improved performance in school, more positive self-image, stronger social skills, and more fulfilling lives.

We believe that each and every child is entitled to experience outdoor recreational activities and discover the natural environment regardless of where they live, learn, or play. We are committed to protecting rights and policies that create the experiences that build meaningful, lifelong connections with nature.

We commit to supporting access to resources, infrastructure, programs, and caring mentors and leaders that create pathways to, and a sense of belonging in nature. In doing so, we will help empower young people and their families to better engage in and appreciate our natural resources and outdoor environments and experience the multitude of benefits connected to them.

OUTDOOR BILL OF RIGHTS

As a supporter of the Faribault region's Outdoor Bill of Rights, our organization will work collaboratively and individually to develop resources that advance the belief that youth and families have the right to:

1) Experience inclusive and affirming recreational opportunities for everyone.

Through our work, we will create opportunities for people to recreate and see themselves in nature. Inclusive recreational experiences may mean different things in different communities and might include things like:

- a) Making investments in adaptive programming and recreation equipment and infrastructure to improve access for youth and families with different physical needs
- b) Investing in resources so everyone can see their communities in nature like multilingual instructors, programming, historical displays, and wayfinding.
- c) Investing in future green spaces and parks in areas that currently have less nearby green spaces
- d) Build pathways from indoors to outdoors like utilizing indoor screen time to build curiosity about nature

2) Feel a sense of safety engaging in nature

Through our work, we will work to make sure that everyone feels a sense of safety and belonging outdoors through things like:

- a) Expanding opportunities to build comfort and develop outdoor skills like swimming, camping, and boating
- b) Making public safety investments in green spaces and parks

3) Build a stronger a sense of environmental stewardship and responsibility within our community

Through our work, we will continue our region's strong stewardship of natural resources and continue to instill a sense of responsibility for the natural world in current and future generations by doing things like:

- a) Including young people in natural resource work and programs to instill a sense of pride while exposing them to gainful careers in natural resource management
- b) Working with the region's multiple new and global communities to introduce them to Minnesota's natural resources in welcoming ways
- c) Including young people as decision makers around the preservation and care of nature

4) Experience improved physical health and emotional wellbeing through increased exposure to nature

Through our work, we will create opportunities for youth and families to live more healthy lives in connection to nature through fostering opportunities like:

- a) Providing structured field trips and experiences for youth and families to experience the outdoors under the guidance of mentors and educators
- b) Create welcoming self-guided activities and experiences through the use of new technologies, improved multi-lingual signage, and wayfinding
- c) Invest in nature play areas to give youth and families more opportunity to play in nature

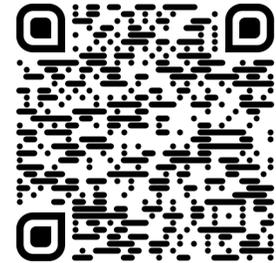


WHAT'S NEXT?

We believe this is a great start but we also know that there's a lot of work left to do to ensure that all youth and families in and around our community have the opportunity to build lifelong, meaningful connections to nature. We also know that this bill of rights may mean different things to different people and organizations. Investments, priorities, strategies and priorities may look different and change over time.

To keep this work moving, the City of Faribault proposes the creation of a cross jurisdictional "Nature Everywhere" community working group. This working group would consist of organizations adopting this document along with community representatives. The Nature Everywhere Community Working Group can serve as a place where organizations can come together to coordinate priorities, developments, and investments in our work to better connect youth and families to nature. Possible invitations to inaugural members include:

- City of Faribault
- Faribault Public Schools
- Rice County
- Minnesota DNR Parks and Trails (Nerstrand State Park)
- River Bend Nature Center
- Minnesota Academies for the Blind and Deaf
- Somali Community Resettlement Services
- University of Minnesota Extension / 4H
- Outdoor experience providers including scouting councils, summer camp providers, and outdoor activity clubs
- Public health advocacy organizations and providers like Healthy Community Initiative, Health Finders, Allina Health, Mayo Clinic, etc.





NATURE EVERYWHERE





March 13, 2025

Kim Barron
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and the Board
Minnesota State Academies
615 Olof Hanson Drive
Faribault, MN 55021

Dear Ms. Barron,

I am writing to express my interest in the vacant Deaf Community Member position on the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (MSAD) Site Council. Having recently learned that this position has been vacant and that the Site Council has struggled to meet quorum, I am eager to contribute my experience and leadership to help rejuvenate the council and strengthen its impact on the MSAD community.

I previously had the privilege of serving on the MSAD Site Council, where I held the roles of Vice Chair and Chair. Shortly after my time on the Site Council, I was honored to be appointed by Governor Mark Dayton to the Minnesota State Academies Board as the Deaf Community Member. I served two consecutive terms from 2011 to 2019, gaining valuable insight into the governance, operations, and strategic planning of the Academies.

My experience in both Site Council leadership and as a state-appointed board member has equipped me with a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing MSAD and the broader deaf community. I am passionate about fostering a strong and collaborative environment where the voices of students, families, and community members are valued and reflected in decision-making.

I understand that the appointing authority for this position is the Board of the Minnesota State Academies. With my experience and dedication to the success of MSAD, I am confident that I can contribute meaningfully to the Site Council's work. I am particularly motivated to help the council regain momentum, ensure quorum, and strengthen its role as an essential advisory body for the school and its leadership.

Thank you for considering my application. I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss how my background and experience align with the needs of the Site Council. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
Sonny Wasilowski

Sonny Wasilowski
1755 Patricks Bay
Faribault, MN 55021
sonny.wasilowski@gmail.com

Objective:

A dedicated and experienced professional with a decade of service at Communication Service for the Deaf, Inc. (CSD), seeking to leverage expertise in project management, advocacy, and collaboration to support access to justice as the Court Interpreter Program Coordinator.

Professional Experience:

Project Manager

Communication Service for the Deaf, Inc. | December 2023 - Present

- Manage projects and initiatives to support organizational goals and objectives.
- Coordinate with internal teams and external partners to ensure project deliverables are met on time and within budget.
- Facilitate communication and collaboration among team members to drive project success.

Sales Operations Manager

Communication Service for the Deaf, Inc. | April 2023 - December 2023

- Oversaw sales operations and implemented processes to streamline workflows and improve efficiency.
- Collaborated with sales teams to develop and implement sales strategies to achieve targets.
- Provided training and support to sales staff on sales tools and processes.

Marketing Project Manager

Communication Service for the Deaf, Inc. | July 2021 - April 2023

- Led marketing projects from conception to completion, ensuring alignment with organizational objectives.
- Coordinated with cross-functional teams to execute marketing campaigns and initiatives.

- Utilized various software tools to analyze market trends and optimize marketing strategies.

Account Executive

Communication Service for the Deaf, Inc. | 2013 - 2016

- Successfully managed client accounts and maintained positive relationships.
- Collaborated with team members to develop and implement effective marketing strategies.
- Provided support to clients and addressed their inquiries or concerns promptly and professionally.

Education:

Bachelor of Science, Business Administration
Gallaudet University | 2003

Graduate Certificate, Public Management
Minnesota State University, Mankato | 2011

Key Skills and Abilities:

- Proficiency in project management, advocacy, and collaboration.
- Strong communication skills, both oral and written, facilitating effective communication among stakeholders.
- Ability to lead projects and work effectively in cross-functional teams, driving continuous improvement efforts.
- Proficient in office work, including document management and scheduling, ensuring efficient project execution.
- Adept at learning new software and training others on its usage, enhancing team capabilities and productivity.
- Ability to follow processes and meet deadlines consistently, ensuring timely delivery of project objectives.



MINNESOTA STATE ACADEMIES FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

615 Olof Hanson Drive, Faribault MN 55021 (507) 384-6600 www.msa.state.mn.us

Financial Audit Status Report As of 04/04/2025

Finding 1:

The Minnesota State Academies' site councils did not meet in accordance with their bylaws.

Recommendations:

- The Minnesota State Academies' site councils should meet in accordance with their bylaws.
- The Minnesota State Academies' governing board should ensure that the site councils meet in accordance with their bylaws.

Status Report:

Completed – with continuous monitoring. The site councils have met even when quorum was not present. The meetings were converted to informational sessions.

Persons Responsible for Implementation: Terry Wilding, Superintendent, MSAB/MSAD Directors, and MSA Governing Board

Date completed: September 2024

Finding 2:

The Minnesota State Academies did not monitor the financial and legal activities of its affiliated foundations, as required by the contracts.

Recommendations:

- The Minnesota State Academies should monitor the financial and legal activities of its affiliated foundations, as required by the contracts.
- The Minnesota State Academies should strengthen its internal controls to ensure it monitors the financial and legal activities of its affiliated foundations.

Status Report:

The MSAB foundation has changed its operations, and a majority of their funding has been moved to a different foundation with MSAB as its beneficiary along with a new designated fund within that foundation for future donations/support. The goal is to wrap up the final disbursement of funds and transition plans by the end of the spring ([Meeting scheduled for April 14, 2025](#))

Persons Responsible for Implementation: Amber Miller, Fiscal Services Director

Date Projected for Completion: Spring of 2025.

Finding 3:

The Minnesota State Academies did not process payroll in accordance with state policy.

Recommendations:

- The Minnesota State Academies should process payroll in accordance with state policy.
- The Minnesota State Academies should strengthen its internal controls to ensure it processes payroll in accordance with state policy.

Status Report:

In progress – We are reviewing policies and procedures. Before finalizing changes/updates, we want to have the input from MMB's audit response team. We are currently awaiting a day/time for a consultation

with them. A new payroll coordinator has been hired. [A procedure for keeping track of supervisor changes to time entries is still under construction.](#)

Persons Responsible for Implementation: Amber Miller, Fiscal Services Director, Payroll Coordinator, All Supervisors at MSA

Date Projected for Completion: The MSA Fiscal Services Director and department supervisors are continuously working together to implement improvements to the overall payroll procedures for staff to ensure that payroll is processed in accordance with state policy. This is a continued work in progress, but we anticipate seeing an improvement in the accuracy and completion of staff time entries by the start of the 2025-2026 school year.

Finding 4:

The Minnesota State Academies did not always purchase goods or services in accordance with state policy.

Recommendations:

- The Minnesota State Academies should purchase goods or services in accordance with state policy.
- The Minnesota State Academies should strengthen its internal controls to ensure it complies with state policy.

Status Report:

Completed – with continuous monitoring.

Persons Responsible for Implementation: Amber Miller, Fiscal Services Director, Patty Rux, Accounting Officer

Date completed: July 2024

Finding 5:

The Minnesota State Academies superintendent approved his own travel.

Recommendations:

- The Minnesota State Academies should require someone other than the superintendent to approve his travel.

Status Report:

Completed – with continuous monitoring.

Persons Responsible for Implementation: MSA Governing Board; MSA Board Chair

Date Completed: August 2024 for out-of-state travel; November 2024 for in-state travel.

Finding 6:

The Minnesota State Academies did not always comply with state policy when paying for the superintendent's travel expenses.

Recommendations:

- The Minnesota State Academies should pay travel expenditures only in accordance with state policy.
- The Minnesota State Academies should collect, from the superintendent, the state money used for personal travel.
- The Minnesota State Academies should strengthen its internal controls to ensure it pays for travel in accordance with state policy.

Status Report:

Completed - with continuous monitoring.

Persons Responsible for Implementation: Amber Miller, Fiscal Services Director; MSA Governing Board; MSA Board Chair

Date Completed: January 2025

Finding 7:

The Minnesota State Academies did not document that it managed its Imprest cash accounts in accordance with its policy.

Recommendations:

- The Minnesota State Academies should document that it manages its Imprest cash accounts in accordance with its policy.
- The Minnesota State Academies should strengthen its internal controls to ensure it manages its Imprest cash accounts in accordance with its policy.

Status Report:

Completed – with continuous monitoring. [An updated policy on our Imprest Cash process is ready for a first reading at the April Board meeting.](#)

Persons Responsible for Implementation: Fiscal Services department - Amber Miller, Patty Rux, and Sara Vollbrecht

Date Completed: September 2024

Finding 8:

The Minnesota State Academies did not manage its assets in accordance with state policy and did not keep an accurate record of its physical inventory.

Recommendations:

- The Minnesota State Academies should manage its assets in accordance with state policy and keep an accurate record of its physical inventory.
- The Minnesota State Academies should develop internal policies and procedures to ensure it manages its assets in accordance with state policy.

Status Report:

In progress – MSA has examined position responsibilities and is in the process of updating position descriptions and procedures.

Persons Responsible for Implementation: Fiscal Services staff, Central Supply staff, IT staff

Date Projected for Completion: The MSA Fiscal Services department has begun updating MSA's policies and procedures for overseeing and managing our inventories with the intent for it to be fully implemented and executed by the Fall of 2025.

Finding 9:

The Minnesota State Academies did not document the timely deposit of its receipts.

Recommendation:

- The Minnesota State Academies should strengthen its internal controls to ensure it documents the timely deposit of its receipts in accordance with state statutes.

Status Report:

Completed – with continuous monitoring.

Persons Responsible for Implementation: Fiscal Services department - Amber Miller, Patty Rux, and Sara Vollbrecht

Date completed: September 2024

Finding 10:

The Minnesota State Academies overreported its expenditures to the Minnesota Department of Education. As a result, the Minnesota Department of Education overpaid the Minnesota State Academies.

Recommendations:

- The Minnesota State Academies should accurately report expenditures to the Minnesota Department of Education.
- The Minnesota State Academies should return to the Minnesota Department of Education the reimbursements received as a result of the overreported expenditures.
- The Minnesota State Academies should strengthen its internal controls to ensure it accurately reports expenditures to the Minnesota Department of Education.

Status Report:

Completed – with continuous monitoring.

Persons Responsible for Implementation: Amber Miller, Fiscal Services Director; Brittany Thomforde, Director of Student Support Services.

Date Completed: December 2024

Finding 11:

The Minnesota State Academies did not always properly document its reconciliations between its submitted medical claims and the reimbursements from the Department of Human Services.

Recommendations:

- The Minnesota State Academies should properly document its reconciliation of third-party billing claims submitted with the reimbursements it receives.
- The Minnesota State Academies should strengthen its internal controls to ensure it receives accurate third-party billing reimbursements.

Status Report:

Completed – with continuous monitoring.

Persons Responsible for Implementation: Kimberly Viskocil, Director of Health Services; Karlene Bleninger, Third-Party Billing Coordinator

Date Completed: October 2024

Finding 12:

The Minnesota State Academies did not always obtain approval from Minnesota Management and Budget prior to accepting donations, as required by state statutes.

Recommendations:

- The Minnesota State Academies should obtain approval from Minnesota Management and Budget prior to accepting all donations, as required by state statutes.
- The Minnesota State Academies should strengthen its internal controls to ensure it accepts donations in accordance with state statutes.

Status Report:

Completed – with continuous monitoring.

Persons Responsible for Implementation: Fiscal Services department - Amber Miller, Patty Rux, and Sara Vollbrecht

Date Completed: May 2024

A - Items that can be taken care of immediately/this spring

- **Category: Staff Retention**

- Subcategory: 360-degree evaluation and staff support
- *Referred to: Board School Operations Committee (Superintendent's Evaluation)*

Status: After investigation, 360-degree evaluation tools were not selected for the superintendent's evaluation due to the costs involved. The board continues to provide annual evaluations for the superintendent each year in June.

For supervisor evaluations, feedback was received through annual surveys and department meetings as well as individual comments/responses to Human Resources and/or the superintendent's office.

- **Category: Staff Retention**

- Subcategory: Site Councils
- *Referred to: Site Council Workgroup*

Status: New site council bylaws were completed and approved by the board in May of 2024. Since that time, we have continued to have challenges in filling site council positions and having sufficient membership at meetings to meet quorum requirements.

Over the past 2 years, the retention of staff has improved and has not been brought up as an area of concern in survey results or department meetings. Retention of staff continues to be a challenge for paraprofessionals and student life staff – however, during recent months, we have seen many of those staff move to different positions at MSA rather than leaving us completely. We continue to face challenges in filling intermittent (substitute) positions.

- **Category: Staff Retention**

- Subcategory: Staff Members with children at MSA
- *Referred to: Terry Wilding; Bridget Flier*

Status: Policy 423 (Employee-Student Relationships/Fraternization) has been updated and is ready for board review. Supervisors work with employees who have children at MSA to provide space for communications and concerns.

- **Category: School Leadership and Collaboration**

- Subcategory: Site Council-Board Collaboration
- *Referred to: Site Council Workgroup*

Status: New site council bylaws were updated in May of 2024. This continues to be a challenge due to the lack of quorum at site council meetings. Membership of the site councils may need to be revisited.

- **Category: School Leadership and Collaboration**

- Subcategory: Organizational Structure
- *Referred to: Board School Operations Committee (Org. Chart)*

Status: An updated organizational chart was completed in the fall of 2024 with back-up administrators in case of prolonged absences. Improving school operations was a goal for the 2024-2025 school year and may result in some changes in our organizational chart (pending budget availability). More information will be shared as soon as possible.

- **Category: School Leadership and Collaboration**

- Subcategory: Accountability, Communication, Transparency
- *Referred to: Board; Department Supervisors*

Status: MSA administration and board members focused on improving communication, transparency, and involvement in decision making over a period of two school years (2022-2023 and 2023-2024). Recent department meetings have indicated that communication and transparency have improved in many ways but implementing methods to involve employees in decision making continue to be an area of concern even with additional tools and information shared amongst our employees. As part of this year's school operations goal, we are also working on school accountability, updating some policies and procedures to examine ways that we can improve this at MSA by utilizing existing committees and leadership.

- **Category: School Leadership and Collaboration**

- Subcategory: Board's Role and Communication/Collaboration
- *Referred to: Board Executive Committee*

Status: We changed the date of our board's annual retreat to September so that our board members could have time to interact with our students, staff, and programs. This was a successful endeavor, and we will continue this approach for the next school year. Board attendance has improved over the past year and communication has gone out to the MSA community via summaries in the superintendent's updates to staff and parents/families.

- **Category: "Parking Lot" – Miscellaneous Issues**

- Subcategory: HC accessible swings/playgrounds
- *Referred to: Terry Wilding; Dan Haugen; RECS*

Status: After dialogue with RECS, we initiated a process to link playgrounds to existing buildings on our campuses so that asset preservation funds could be utilized to improve the playgrounds. We have requested additional asset preservation funds from the legislature and will review our list of projects to determine the timelines for this project. We will do our best internally to maintain the best access to our playgrounds as possible.

- **Category: "Parking Lot" – Miscellaneous Issues**

- Subcategory: Nepotism Policy
- *Referred to: Board Policy Committee*

Status: Policy 426 – Nepotism was updated 9/20/24, 426B Family Disclosure Form updated 9/20/24. Currently, no supervisors at MSA are supervising any family members as defined in this policy.

- **Category: “Parking Lot” – Miscellaneous Issues**

- Subcategory: Out of state travel
- *Referred to: Anne Grace Donatucci; Instructional Leadership Team (Professional Development Reports)*

Status: As of July 2024, all out of state travel must be approved by the Board. Policy 740 has been updated as well as Procedure 4007 to ensure consistency in oversight and approval of out-of-state travel plans.

- **Category: “Parking Lot” – Miscellaneous Issues**

- Subcategory: Working Job Titles
- *Referred to: Board School Operations Committee (Working Titles/Org. Chart)*

Status: Working titles have been updated and are in use. As we add new positions and/or update our organizational chart, we will continue to keep an eye on this.
Completed as of June 2024

B - Items to be referred to Site Council, a committee, ILT or Department Heads

- **Category: Enrollment**

- Subcategory: Family Support
- *Referred to: Lance Hall; Outreach Department; School Principals*

Status: We have increased our commitment to family support. Some examples of events that we've added, restored, and/or continued include: ECE family education classes, Parent-Child Institute, Family Immersion/Learning Weekend, Parent ASL classes, "Dinner Table Syndrome" webinar, ASL Literacy Nights at both MSAD and MSAB, MSA Road trips, and hiring of outreach specialists for both campuses.

- **Category: Enrollment**

- Subcategory: Support for Spoken English
- *Referred to: Anne Grace Donatucci; Brittany Thomforde; Ryan Johnson; Jody Olson; Language Planning Committee*

Status: MSA has 2 full-time SLPs at MSAD and contract with a company to provide 2 additional individuals to support students' development of spoken language at MSAB; our SLPs are highly qualified and skilled in developing language skills as working with AAC. We also reassigned a teacher to fill our vacant ASL specialist position. Also, at MSAD, we have worked on clarification and support of our approach towards use and development of English/ASL within our bilingual language philosophy. A procedure has been developed for support for students who arrive at MSAD with limited ASL skills. This procedure has experienced challenges in being implemented fully this year and requires additional attention/discussion for the next school year. A request has been received to possibly hire additional SLPs and/or ASL specialists (pending budget availability).

- **Category: Enrollment**

- Subcategory: Admissions/IEP Meetings
- *Referred to: Anne Grace Donatucci; Brittany Thomforde; Outreach department*

Status: The admission process has been revisited and streamlined. We have experienced an increase in parent/family interest and tours which have resulted in increases in our admissions. Our staff have worked to develop positive relationships with school districts across the state and have been invited to participate in evaluations and IEP meetings as appropriate. With Anne Grace Donatucci's departure, Brittany Thomforde is currently coordinating new student admissions until the new Director of Curriculum and Educational Programs starts in June. Over the past two school years, we have enrolled over 65 new students on both campuses.

- **Category: Enrollment**

- Subcategory: Promotion of MSA/Statewide Visibility
- *Referred to: Anne Grace Donatucci; Lance Hall; Outreach Department; Possible Strategic Plan Committee*

Status: We hired two new outreach teachers in January 2024 who work collaboratively with our Director of Community Engagement, and they have worked

hard to set up activities, develop relationships, and provide information to stakeholders across the state. Some examples of activities our staff have provided include: MSAB triathlon event; MSAB short course programs; MSAD literacy nights; Parent ASL classes; Online academy courses; Evaluations and Consultation services in public school districts; Booths at different local/state/national events; updates to our website; and participation in state-level professional development and conferences for networking purposes.

- **Category: Engagement of Community Stakeholders**

- Subcategory: Parent/Family Engagement

- *Referred to: Instructional Leadership Team; Lance Hall; Outreach Department*

Status: Like mentioned above, we have increased our commitment to family support and engagement. Some examples of events that we've added, restored, and/or continued include: ECE family education classes, Parent-Child Institute, Family Immersion/Learning Weekend, Parent ASL classes, "Dinner Table Syndrome" webinar, ASL Literacy Nights at both MSAD and MSAB, MSA Road trips, and hiring of outreach specialists for both campuses. We've also increased our communications with parents and families, including newsletters and regular social media posts.

- **Category: Engagement of Community Stakeholders**

- Subcategory: Engagement of external stakeholders

- *Referred to: Anne Grace Donatucci; Lance Hall; Outreach Department*

Status: As mentioned above, we have increased our contacts with external stakeholders, participating in conferences, presentations, advisory committees, and other activities with community groups, including the National Federation of the Blind, the American Council of the Blind, the Minnesota Association of Deaf Citizens, MSAD Foundation, Minnesota Department of Education, the Minnesota Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Minnesota Department of Health, Rice County Sheriff's office, and many more. We will continue to seek opportunities to develop relationships and solicit feedback from our stakeholders.

- **Category: Engagement of Community Stakeholders**

- Subcategory: Collaboration and Communication

- *Referred to: Board (meeting/town hall schedule); Terry Wilding; Department Supervisors*

Status: We have not hosted a town hall meeting since the last one in 2023, but we did have opportunities for our board to interact with our staff and students during our fall 2024 Board Retreat on our campuses. The public has been offered opportunities for public comment at all board meetings.

- **Category: School Leadership and Collaboration**

- Subcategory: Connection between MSAB/MSAD

- *Referred to: Site Council Workgroup; Instructional Leadership Team*

Status: We have continued to plan and implement joint activities for students on both campuses. Training sessions for staff groups are also provided for staff on both

campuses as appropriate. A small number of students continue to receive services on both campuses each year, based on their individual needs. Information is shared across both campuses as much as possible.

Category: School Leadership and Collaboration

- Subcategory: Site Council-Board Collaboration
- *Referred to: Site Council Workgroup*

Status: Like mentioned above, we updated our site council bylaws and rosters, but we are continuing to struggle with filling specific positions which have led to limited success with meeting quorum. During June's organizational meeting, we may need to discuss ways to improve this for the next school year. During the 2024-2025 school year, only one site council representative participated in a board meeting (one meeting).

- **Category: "Parking Lot" – Miscellaneous Issues**

- Subcategory: Fundraising for Extracurricular activities
- *Referred to: Instructional Leadership Team; Amber Miller*

Status: We are currently reviewing our fundraising policy and procedures. Part of this work will include an improved fundraising request form to improve efficiency in communication and consistency between both campuses. The MSAD Foundation has been revived and is working with MSAD to assist in different fundraising efforts. MSAB's foundation has transferred their funds to a new foundation with MSAB as the beneficiary and is working on finalizing plans for a new "vision" for the future.

C - Items for Strategic Plan work, more long term, goal planning

Referred to: All items in this category will be forwarded to the strategic plan committees.

We are continuing progress towards needs and goals identified in the previous strategic plan – renewing/refreshing our strategic plan has been postponed due to the goal of incorporating feedback from our financial and human resources audits as well as accreditation recommendations from COGNIA (due during the 2025-2026 school year). At a recent department heads meeting, we discussed the need to develop a short-term school improvement plan to respond to needs expressed by staff within our campus climate surveys and department meetings. This work will begin soon so we can continue to grow as a school.

- **Category: Enrollment**
 - Subcategory: Number of deaf staff at MSAD
- **Category: Enrollment**
 - Subcategory: Enrollment/Class size
- **Category: Enrollment**
 - Subcategory: Admissions/IEP Meetings
- **Category: Staff Retention**
 - Subcategory: Staff Members with children at MSA
- **Category: Staff Retention**
 - Subcategory: Staff salaries
- **Category: Engagement of Community Stakeholders**
 - Subcategory: Parent/Family Engagement
- **Category: Engagement of Community Stakeholders**
 - Subcategory: Regional Schools
- **Category: Engagement of Community Stakeholders**
 - Subcategory: Strategic Plan
- **Category: Engagement of Community Stakeholders**
 - Subcategory: Collaboration and Communication
- **Category: “Parking Lot” – Miscellaneous Issues**
 - Subcategory: Athletics and Activities
- **Category: “Parking Lot” – Miscellaneous Issues**
 - Subcategory: Relationship with MNCDHH
- **Category: “Parking Lot” – Miscellaneous Issues**
 - Subcategory: Utilization of our campuses
- **Category: “Parking Lot” – Miscellaneous Issues**
 - Subcategory: Facilities Planning
- **Category: “Parking Lot” – Miscellaneous Issues**
 - Subcategory: Legislative Transparency
- **Category: “Parking Lot” – Miscellaneous Issues**
 - Subcategory: Working Job Titles
- **Category: “Parking Lot” – Miscellaneous Issues**
 - Subcategory: Braille Proficiency

D - Items that are out of our scope, out of our control

No updates – The board determined that the items listed below either were already addressed by existing policies/programs and/or could not be properly addressed by additional board or MSA actions. The italicized text below provides the final disposition. This section is included in the update as a reminder of our prior discussion.

- **Category: Enrollment**
 - Subcategory: Number of deaf staff at MSAD
 - *Recommendation for Referral: N/A re: Deaf staff – input re: diversity of staff has been shared with Bridget Flier for incorporation in the Affirmative Action Plan (staff recruitment/retention)*
- **Category: Engagement of Community Stakeholders**
 - Subcategory: Large Fundraisers
 - *Recommendation for Referral: N/A – Organizations host their own activities. Our foundations do excellent work but need time to increase their funding sources.*
- **Category: School Leadership and Collaboration**
 - Subcategory: Timing/Process of decisions
 - *Recommendation for Referral: N/A – already addressed within communication goals.*
- **Category: School Leadership and Collaboration**
 - Subcategory: Superintendent's Role and Contract
 - *Recommendation for Referral: N/A – already addressed.*
- **Category: "Parking Lot" – Miscellaneous Issues**
 - Subcategory: Working from Home (Teleworking)
 - *Recommendation for Referral: N/A – policy already in place and is being utilized appropriately.*
- **Category: "Parking Lot" – Miscellaneous Issues**
 - Subcategory: Sign Language Proficiency
 - *Recommendation for Referral: N/A - Policy is in place and is being utilized*
- **Category: "Parking Lot" – Miscellaneous Issues**
 - Subcategory: Pay Increases/Salary concerns
 - *Recommendation for Referral: N/A – already addressed in bargaining contracts – Input regarding recruitment and benefits shared with Human Resources.*
- **Category: "Parking Lot" – Miscellaneous Issues**
 - Subcategory: Outside Investigations
 - *Recommendation for Referral: N/A – we follow rules/regulations set up by MMB to protect MSA interests.*

**Minnesota State Academies
Financial Report-FY25
July 1, 2024-March 31, 2025**

75% of Fiscal Year Expended

**Payroll Allocation 80%
Non Payroll Allocation 20%**

General Fund-1000 Fund	FY 2024 Expended	Current FY25 Budget	FY25 YTD Expended	Available Budget FY25	Percent Expended-FY25
Payroll-MSAD	\$4,728,667.23	\$5,463,367.00	\$3,481,122.04	\$1,982,244.96	63.72%
Non Payroll-MSAD	\$313,164.15	\$334,597.00	\$192,756.93	\$141,840.07	57.61%
Payroll-MSAB	\$2,977,121.20	\$3,519,805.00	\$2,220,255.46	\$1,299,549.54	63.08%
Non Payroll-MSAB	\$204,876.50	\$247,097.00	\$126,102.94	\$120,994.06	51.03%
Payroll-Shared Svs	\$4,383,800.69	\$5,016,327.47	\$3,394,152.99	\$1,622,174.48	67.66%
Non Payroll-Shared Svs	\$1,880,414.94	\$3,911,783.49	\$1,521,584.91	\$2,390,198.58	38.90%
R&R-Non Payroll	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00	\$224,769.34	\$25,230.66	89.91%
Audiology Booth (NEW in FY24)	\$1,575.00	\$123,425.00	\$1,501.99	\$121,923.01	1.22%
Payroll-Mental Health Day Treatment Prog (NEW in FY24)	\$1,045.64	\$148,954.36	\$0.00	\$148,954.36	0.00%
Non Payroll-Mental Health Day Treatment Prog (NEW in FY24)	\$53,930.00	\$426,070.00	\$34,453.72	\$391,616.28	8.09%
Unemployment Insurance (New in FY24)	\$162,132.06	\$479,867.94	\$155,403.08	\$324,464.86	32.38%
Total 1000 Fund	\$14,956,727.41	\$19,921,294.26	\$11,352,103.40	\$7,582,232.35	56.98%

**1000 Fund Expended FY24 as of March 31, 2024
\$10,012,978.81**

**Payroll Allocation 59%
Non Payroll Allocation 41%**

Restricted Misc Special Revenue Fund-2000 Fund	FY 2024 Expended	Current FY25 Budget	FY25 YTD Expended	Available Budget FY25	Percent Expended-FY25
Payroll-MSAD	\$487.20	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Non Payroll-MSAD	\$27,104.34	\$50,149.23	\$17,667.28	\$32,481.95	35.23%
Payroll-MSAB	\$13,981.37	\$160,592.72	\$7,149.03	\$153,443.69	4.45%
Non Payroll-MSAB	\$17,461.73	\$554,473.10	\$9,526.58	\$544,946.52	1.72%
Payroll-Shared Svs	\$179,814.55	\$194,162.62	\$132,893.00	\$61,269.62	68.44%
Non Payroll-Shared Svs	\$80,189.78	\$2,082,897.20	\$68,446.87	\$2,014,450.33	3.29%
Total 2000 Fund	\$319,038.97	\$3,042,274.87	\$235,682.76	\$2,806,592.11	7.75%

**2000 Fund Expended FY24 as of March 31, 2024
\$214,521.53**

**Minnesota State Academies
Financial Report-FY25
July 1, 2024-March 31, 2025**

75% of Fiscal Year Expended

Payroll Allocation 99%
Non Payroll Allocation 1%

Other Misc Special Revenue Fund-2001 Fund	FY 2024 Expended	Current FY25 Budget	FY25 YTD Expended	Available Budget FY25	Percent Expended-FY25
Payroll-MSAD	\$1,833,088.50	\$2,108,741.52	\$1,351,350.72	\$757,390.80	64.08%
Non Payroll-MSAD	\$3,314.33	\$855,997.55	\$5.49	\$855,992.06	0.00%
Payroll-MSAB	\$1,998,548.89	\$1,956,288.11	\$1,601,620.21	\$354,667.90	81.87%
Non Payroll-MSAB	\$1,943.65	\$771,142.73	\$575.83	\$770,566.90	0.07%
Payroll-Shared Svs	\$1,611.08	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Non Payroll-Shared Svs	\$15,156.26	\$1,180,526.67	\$24,886.80	\$1,155,639.87	2.11%
Total 2001 Fund	\$3,853,662.71	\$6,872,696.58	\$2,978,439.05	\$3,894,257.53	43.34%

**2001 Fund Expended FY24 as of March 31, 2024
\$2,866,141.94**

Non Payroll Allocation 100%

Endowment Fund-2400 Fund	FY 2024 Expended	Current FY25 Budget	FY25 YTD Expended	Available Budget FY25	Percent Expended-FY25
Non Payroll-MSAD	\$9.76	\$6,944.08	\$7.23	\$6,936.85	0.10%
Total 2400 Fund	\$9.76	\$6,944.08	\$7.23	\$6,936.85	0.10%

**2400 Fund Expended FY24 as of March 31, 2024
\$7.35**

Non Payroll Allocation 100%

Gift Fund-2403 Fund	FY 2024 Expended	Current FY25 Budget	FY25 YTD Expended	Available Budget FY25	Percent Expended-FY25
Non Payroll-MSAD	\$9,792.37	\$131,403.86	\$16,480.31	\$114,923.55	12.54%

Minnesota State Academies

75% of Fiscal Year Expended

Financial Report-FY25

Non Payroll-MSAB	\$51,739.79	\$565,986.28	\$40,926.19	\$524,660.09	7.24%
Total 2403 Fund	\$61,532.15	\$696,990.14	\$57,406.50	\$639,583.64	8.24%

2403 Fund Expended FY24 as of March 31, 2024
\$47,354.73

Payroll Allocation 66%

Non Payroll Allocation 34%

Federal Fund-3000 Fund	FY 2024 Expended	Current FY25 Budget	FY25 YTD Expended	Available Budget FY25	Percent Expended-FY25
Payroll-MSAD	\$124,023.48	\$121,693.84	\$121,693.84	\$0.00	100.00%
Non Payroll-MSAD	\$15,518.98	\$31,270.71	\$13,187.69	\$18,083.02	42.17%
Payroll-MSAB	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Non Payroll-MSAB	\$10,500.00	\$19,000.00	\$9,666.90	\$9,333.10	50.88%
Payroll-Shared Svs	\$109,406.14	\$83,691.55	\$59,555.35	\$24,136.20	71.16%
Non Payroll-Shared Svs	\$37,949.71	\$127,126.73	\$70,047.49	\$57,079.24	55.10%
Total 3000 Fund	\$297,398.31	\$382,782.83	\$274,151.27	\$108,631.56	71.62%

3000 Fund Expended FY24 as of March 31, 2024
\$236,319.80

Non Payroll Allocation 100%

Misc Agency Fund-6000 Fund	FY 2024 Expended	Current FY25 Budget	FY25 YTD Expended	Available Budget FY25	Percent Expended-FY25
Non Payroll-MSAD	\$109,027.26	\$221,431.80	\$60,417.03	\$161,014.77	27.28%
Non Payroll-MSAB	\$7,806.01	\$42,188.97	\$17,163.59	\$25,025.38	40.68%
Total 6000 Fund	\$116,833.27	\$263,620.77	\$77,580.62	\$186,040.15	29.43%

6000 Fund Expended FY24 as of March 31, 2024
\$76,298.62

Total All Funds	\$19,605,202.58	\$31,186,603.53	\$14,975,370.83	\$15,224,274.19	48.02%
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**Minnesota State Academies
Financial Report-FY25
July 1, 2024-March 31, 2025**

75% of Fiscal Year Expended

**Payroll Allocation
Non Payroll Allocation**

**60%
40%**

Revenue and Expenditure Summary	Fiscal Year 24 School Year 2023-24	Fiscal Year 25 School Year 2024-2025			
	Expended	Allocation	Expended	Available	Cash on Hand
General Fund (1000)	\$14,956,727.41	\$19,921,294.26	\$11,352,103.40	\$8,569,190.86	\$8,569,190.86
Special Restricted (2000)	\$319,038.97	\$3,042,274.87	\$235,682.76	\$2,806,592.11	\$2,806,592.11
Other Mscl (2001)	\$3,853,662.71	\$6,872,696.58	\$2,978,439.05	\$3,894,257.53	\$2,102,499.00
Endowment (2400)	\$9.76	\$6,944.08	\$7.23	\$6,936.85	\$6,936.85
Gift (2403)	\$61,532.15	\$696,990.14	\$57,406.50	\$639,583.64	\$639,583.64
Federal (3000)	\$297,398.31	\$382,782.83	\$274,151.27	\$108,631.56	-\$2,817.00
Agency Fund (6000)	\$116,833.27	\$263,620.77	\$77,580.62	\$186,040.15	\$186,040.15
Totals	\$19,605,202.58	\$31,186,603.53	\$14,975,370.83	\$16,211,232.70	\$14,308,025.61

2001 Fund Available Cash does not match Cash on Hand due to the fact that payments are made periodically throughout the year from Minnesota Department of Education.

3000 Fund Available Cash does not match Cash on Hand due to the fact that Drawdown for the grants are not made until the end of the year.

Minutes of a Regular Meeting Minnesota State Academy for the Blind Site Council

The meeting of the MSAB Site Council was held on March 6, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. Due to a lack of quorum, the Site Council meeting was converted into an information sharing session, in which no business was conducted. The superintendent and administration team shared updates from their respective departments.

Stakeholders Present:

- Harry Weber
- Katie Davidson
- Zena Anderson
- Madeline Christensen

Ex-Officio Representatives Present:

- John Davis
- Brittany Thomforde
- Sheila Koenig
- Gary Boettcher
- Lance Hall

1. Welcome and Roll Call

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

3. Reports

4. Old Business

5. New Business

6. Announcements

7. Adjourn



MSAD SITE COUNCIL – No quorum
Location: Online - Zoom Meeting
Date: March 5th, 2025

Member Attendance

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

Ex Officio Members

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

The meeting of the MSAD Site Council was held on March 5, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. Due to a lack of quorum, the Site Council meeting ended. No business was conducted.



Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting Minnesota State Academies Board

An Executive Committee Meeting of the Minnesota State Academies Board was held Tuesday, March 18, 2025, beginning at 3:00 PM in the Tate Hall Conference Room, 615 Olof Hanson Drive, Faribault, MN 55021.

Present: Chair Annette Freiheit, Officer of Business Affairs Katie Wangberg, Superintendent Terry Wilding.

Absent: Vice-Chair Sara Pratt.

1. Call to Order

Chair Freiheit called the meeting to order at 3:08 pm.

2. Meeting Minutes Review

Chair Freiheit asked whether Superintendent Wilding was able to follow up with HomeRun Leadership. Superintendent Wilding is currently in talks with Dr. Dave Webb in determining possible dates and the scope of training.

3. Legislative Update

Superintendent Wilding shared that there were not much updates, as this year's session is moving slowly. More activity should be taking place over the next few weeks, as the deadline for bill introduction is April 1st. Katie Wangberg asked whether the current federal government cuts would impact MSA. Superintendent Wilding explained that it might impact Medicaid Third Party Billing and our federal lunch program, but the extent of the impact is not clear. Other than that, we do not get a large amount of direct federal funding. At this point, there is quite an amount of uncertainty. As for the Minnesota budget, we may not expect a large increase, as the state overall budget forecast is not good. We will continue to monitor the situation.

4. Superintendent Evaluation Process

Chair Freiheit would like to start preparations for the closed meeting in June. She will work with Kim Barron on developing a survey form for the board members to share their observations prior to the evaluation. Superintendent Wilding will submit his end of year progress report during the first week of May. Kim will start the survey in April.

Superintendent Wilding added that a new human resources director has been hired, due to start in April. Katie Wangberg asked about the previous incumbent. Superintendent Wilding was unable to share much details, due to employment privacy laws.

5. Adjourn

Chair Freiheit adjourned the meeting at 3:18 pm.

Minutes of Policy Committee Meeting

Minnesota State Academies Board

A Policy Committee Meeting of the Minnesota State Academies Board was held on Monday, March 31, 2025, beginning at 3:00pm via Zoom.

Present: Superintendent Terry Wilding, Hernan Moncada, Katie Wangberg, Mary Cashman-Bakken, Jody Olson, Sarah Allen, Kerry Vigesaa-David

Absent: Ryan Johnson

1. Call to Order: 3:09pm

2. Meeting Minutes Review: Meeting minutes approved, no changes

3. Policies to Review from MSBA: None

4. Policies to Review for a Second Reading

4.A. 423: Employee-Student Relationships/Fraternization: No feedback, recommendations or changes. Ready to move forward.

4.B. 625 Inclement Weather: No recommendations or changes, Ready to move forward.

4.C. 740 Special Expense/Outstate Travel: There were minor changes/updates to this policy. Ready to move forward.

5. Policies to Review Before Revision

5.A. 525 Violence Prevention- New policy by State of MN, should be ready in Fall, Page #3 has information pulled from MSBA draft, applies to training and strategies to reduce violence. ILT and Site Councils will review next. No feedback from the committee yet, awaiting further revisions from the ILT/Site Councils.

6. Policies to Review Prior to a First Reading

6.A 451 Social Media: Updated this policy, the Director of Curriculum and Educational Programs will oversee official MSA social media accounts. At a later date, Superintendent Wilding will work on an AI policy separately as this is not a social media platform.

6.B 520 Participation in Research Projects and Student Surveys: Changes are from the new statute, includes verbiage from sample policy from MSBA. Making changes to surveys to ask for less confidential information and avoiding ways to make students identifiable.

6.C 742 Imprest Fund: There were minor changes, names edited, explained the requirements of Imprest funds.

7. Policies to Review for Reauthorization:

7.A 303 Academies Administrator Superintendent Selection: MSA Board is responsible for this search. Policy committee approved.

7.B 304: Academies Administrator Superintendent Appointment, Duties and Evaluation: Position Description needs to be updated every 3 years, Performance Appraisal every year. Policy committee approved.

7.C 518 DNR - DNI: Some students may have these; we just gather the information from the parents regarding orders for their children and we save that for the medical staff if needed. Policy committee approved.

7.D 750 MN Resource Library Acquisition and Collection: The policy committee approved this.

8. Adjourn: 3:34pm