

Regular Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 15, 2026 6:00 PM

Lysen Hall, MSAB Campus, 400 SE 6th Ave, 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 Board Meeting Minutes for Approval

5.B. Human Resources Report

5.C. Donations

6. **Policies**

6.A. Policies for Reauthorization: None

6.B. New or Updated Policies for Approval

6.B.1. Policy 903 - Visitors to MSA Buildings
and Sites

6.C. Policies for First Reading: None

7. **Procedures for Review/Approval**

7.A. Procedure 2301: Interview and Recommendations -
MSA Board Candidates

8. **Action Items**

8.A. Out of State Travel Requests

8.B. Consider Site Council Appointment

8.C. Meghan Lewis, MSAD Teacher Representative

9. **Information Items:**

9.A. Superintendent's Report

9.B. Director's Reports

9.B.1. Director of Student Support Services:
Brittany Thomforde

9.B.2. Health Services Director: Kimberly
Viskocil

9.B.3. Physical Plant Director: Dan Haugen

9.B.4. Student Life Director Report: Nichelle
Steffen

9.B.5. Fiscal Services Director: Amber Miller

9.B.5.a. FY Year-to-Date Report

10. Strategic Plan

11. Board Committee Reports

11.A. Site Council Reports

11.B. Executive Committee

11.C. Policy Committee

12. Announcements:

12.A. Subsequent Meetings:

- May 13, 2026, 6:00 PM at MSAD
- June 17, 2026, 6:00 PM at MSAB

13. Adjourn



Minutes of Regular Board Meeting Minnesota State Academies Board

A Regular Board Meeting of the Minnesota State Academies Board was held Wednesday, March 11, 2026, beginning at 1:00 PM in the MSAD Wilkins Hall, 615 Olof Hanson Drive, Faribault, MN 55021.

Present: Chair Annette Freiheit, Sara Pratt, Katie Wangberg, Diane Dohnalik. Jamers Speier and Hernan Moncada joined the meeting during the Open Forum section.

Absent: Oluwagbenga Ogungbe.

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

Call to Order

Chair Freiheit called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Adoption of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda as drafted. This motion, made by Sara Pratt and seconded by Jamers Speier, passed.

Open Forum: Justin Cyboron - Curriculum Implementation Cycle

Justin Cyboron, Curriculum and Educational Programs Director, shared that the School Accountability Committee has established a curriculum review cycle, with this year's focus being Science, Transition, and Self-Contained Classes. The committee will gather input from staff, older students, stakeholders, and individuals with varying disabilities to inform curriculum options prior to purchase.

Sonny Wasilowski noted that state statute requires inclusion of parent feedback in curriculum planning. The Site Council was identified as one option for sharing information with parents, though it currently includes only one parent representative. Superintendent Wilding suggested exploring additional methods to gather feedback, including an exhibit booth at events and virtual opportunities. The committee's next project will be development of the course catalog.

Public Comment:

Davey Olson, MSAD alumnus, shared concerns from fellow alumni regarding enrollment. He emphasized the importance of language accessibility, including accessibility for blind students, and requested the Board prioritize enrollment efforts. He also expressed interest in alumni collaborating with MSA to support these efforts.

Consent Agenda

MSA February Board Meeting Minutes for Approval

Human Resources Report Donations

Chair Freiheit thanked all of the donors for their recent contributions. Hernan Moncada moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Sara Pratt, the motion passed.

Policies

Policies for Reauthorization: None

New or Updated Policies for Approval

902 - Use of MSA Facilities and Equipment

Superintendent Wilding noted that revenue from facility rentals goes towards the MSA staff professional development fund, and we regularly rent out MSA spaces approximately one or two times a month.

Katie Wangberg moved to approve Policy 902 as written and was seconded by Hernan Moncada. Motion passed.

Policies for First Reading

903 - Visitors to MSA Buildings and Sites

Superintendent Wilding shared proposed updates to Policy 903 to support ongoing school safety efforts. Sara Pratt asked about procedures and whether FERPA requirements were considered. Superintendent Wilding confirmed that FERPA will be taken into consideration and reflected in the procedures.

Action Items

Out of State Travel Requests: None

Lockdown Drills

Following a request for update from last month's board meeting, Superintendent Wilding reported that MSA has not conducted active shooting drills, consistent with state statute. Regarding lockdown drills, MSA has identified gaps during recent drills and is addressing them through ongoing crisis management team meetings. Additional drills are planned. As previously shared, an updated crisis management plan will be submitted for Board approval in June for implementation this fall.

Chair Freiheit asked about the emotional impact on students and staff as referenced in state statute. Superintendent Wilding stated that training will address communication about whether a lockdown is a drill and will include various scenarios to support staff and student understanding of safety procedures. Chair Freiheit suggested including a debrief component focused on emotional impact. Sonny asked about the most recent lockdown drill; Superintendent Wilding responded that procedures have been addressed. Sara Pratt noted that middle and high school students could receive some training, and Superintendent Wilding confirmed this will be included in the new plan. The plan will be shared with the Board in closed session at the June meeting.

Information Items:

Superintendent's Report

Legislative Audit Update

Superintendent Wilding shared minor updates, and reported that additional documentation has been submitted as requested by the legislative auditors.

School Climate Survey Results

Supt. Wilding shared a summary of the attached survey results, noting the highest response rate was from staff, with lower participation from families and students. Despite lower turnout, responses were thoughtful. An AI-generated summary will be created to identify key themes and areas of focus.

Superintendent Wilding also reported presenting the Academies' annual budget requests at the Capitol, which were generally well received. Chair Freiheit asked whether campus directors would meet with students to develop strategies based on the results of the survey.

Superintendent Wilding has not yet met with directors but will incorporate this into next week's leadership team meeting. Sonny Wasilowski noted the campuses are distinct and suggested keeping survey results separated by campus.

Katie Wangberg left the meeting.

Director's Reports

MSAB Director - John Davis

John Davis, MSAB director, reported that several new students recently enrolled, with additional students expressing interest for next year. Students are currently working on an audio drama, which will be posted on the website. He also invited Board members to attend upcoming MSAB events.

MSAD Director - Jason Cox

Jason Cox, MSAD director, reported that enrollment is expected to hit 86 shortly. He shared recent highlights from student athletics, academics, and math competitions, noting that Salan Saied and Mya Palmer were recognized for their performances at recent tournaments. He also provided updates on upcoming athletic events and shared that students expressed appreciation for opportunities to meet, socialize, and compete with peers from other states.

Sara Pratt commended John Davis and Jason Cox for coordinating these opportunities for students across both campuses.

Curriculum and Educational Programs - Justin Cyboron

Justin Cyboron reported that MSA is currently undergoing the Cognia accreditation process. A virtual input session between a few MSA Board members and the accreditation team is scheduled for April 28. This will be discussed at the Executive Committee meeting next Monday to determine whether a special meeting is needed.

He also shared that statewide outreach efforts remain active, including participation in committees and meetings, and providing workshops across the state. Representatives will host exhibit booths at upcoming events, and the department is identifying targeted locations and audiences for outreach. Additionally, work continues with the Minnesota Association of School Administrators to connect with school leadership statewide to ensure students receive appropriate services.

Sara Pratt noted that MSA did a an excellent job representing the Academies at recent spring and fall conferences.

Fiscal Services Director - Amber Miller

FY Year-to-Date Report

Amber Miller, Fiscal Services Director, reported that MSA is entering the busiest part of the year, focusing on year-end spending and identifying savings for the next year. She also shared that review of department budget requests for the upcoming fiscal year has begun. Cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) increases have been approved in all union contracts.

Strategic Plan

Chair Freiheit reported that the strategic plan steering committee will meet April 1 to identify priority areas and goals. A draft will be shared publicly in April or May to inform final goal development, with the final draft anticipated for Board approval at the June meeting.

Board Committee Reports

Site Council Reports

No significant activity was reported on behalf of the MSAB Site Council. Sonny Wasilowski reported that the MSAD Site Council continues discussion on holiday recognition. The Site Council appreciates the Board's review of state statutes and would like the opportunity to provide input. The Site Council also expressed interest in focusing on admissions standards and plans to distribute a survey in April regarding sports and activities. Chair Justine Gonzalez will be departing MSA, and a replacement is being sought.

Policy Committee

Supt. Widling reported that review of relevant state statutes has begun and noted the process is complex. Input will be sought from stakeholders. Admission standards are included among the five statutes identified by the Policy Committee for focus. He also noted that pursuing statutory changes through legislation will be challenging, but work will move forward.

Announcements:

Subsequent Meetings:

- **April 15, 2026 at 6:00 pm, MSAB**
- **May 13, 2026 at 6:00 pm, MSAD**
- **June 17, 2026 at 6:00 pm, MSAB**

Chair Freiheit noted the meeting time change beginning in April and that the June meeting is expected to be busy.

Adjourn

Hernan Moncada motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Jamers Speier, the motion passed.

Chair Freiheit adjourned the meeting at 2:11 p.m.

Human Resources Report

March 2026 Board Meeting

Personnel Changes February 25, 2026 – March 24, 2026

Retiring Employees:

1. Ben Fisher
- 2.

Vacancies Filled:

1. Valerie Shaw
2. Jeff Trnka

Resignations/Separations:

1. Matt Heywood

Leave of Absences (LOA/PPL):

1. Fiona Catflisch
2. Angie Thomes
3. Auna Ortiz
4. Bryan Ortiz
5. Brian Starkson

Return from LOA:

1. Billy Bissell
2. Kali Bissell
3. Aimee Sever-Hall
4. Kirsten Mulally

Permanent Lay-Off: None

Re-Call from Lay-Off: None

Transfers:

Work Out of Class:

1. Lee Jones, MSAD Institution Educational Supervisor
2. Julia Forti, RPA

Probation to Permanent:

1. Emma Hua

Non-Certifications:

Phased Retirement Option Appointments (PRO): None

ECA Positions 2025-2026 and Staff Assigned:

Items that do not require Board Approval: None

March 2026 Donations

Date:	3/18/2026
From:	St. Paul & MN Foundation
Type:	Monetary Donation
Amount:	\$2085.49
For:	MSAB Designated Fund
Deposited to:	#1428
Thank You:	Heidi Cole/John Davis

Policy #: 903
Title: VISITORS TO MSA BUILDINGS AND SITES
Date of Initial Approval: 12/08/2021
Revision/Re-authorization Dates:
Reviewers: MSA Department Supervisors

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines and clear expectations regarding visitors to the Minnesota State Academies (MSA) campuses, buildings, and other school property.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. MSA encourages the involvement of parents and community members in school programs and student activities. MSA welcomes visits to school buildings and school property by parents and community members provided the visits are consistent with the health, education, and safety of students and employees and are conducted within the procedures and requirements established by the MSA administration.

B. MSA reaffirms its position on the importance of maintaining a school environment that is safe for students and employees and free of activity that may be disruptive to the student learning process or employees' work environment.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The MSA administration will develop procedures for visitors, including check-in requirements for individuals wishing to enter instructional and dorm buildings. Those procedures will include visitors on campus for events, both sponsored by MSA or by outside organizations. Communication, Language, and Accessibility (MSA Policy #121) will be incorporated into the procedures and emphasized with all visitors.

B. The MSA administration will also develop procedures for outside organizations/groups to request a tour of buildings, instructional spaces, and/or other school properties.

C. **Directors** ~~The superintendent~~ shall be responsible for providing coordination and communication that may be needed throughout the process. **They are also responsible for providing training to staff members to ensure that FERPA regulations and/or limitations are strictly enforced.**

IV. VISITOR LIMITATIONS

A. An individual or group may be denied permission to visit MSA buildings, campuses, and other school events or such permission may be revoked if the visitor(s) does not comply with MSA policies, procedures, and regulations or if the visit is not in the best interest of students, employees, or MSA.

B. An individual or group who enters school property without complying with MSA visitor procedures and requirements may be guilty of criminal trespass

- and thus subject to criminal penalty. MSA administrators may request police intervention in those situations.
- C. Individuals who require accessibility accommodations for their visit to MSA must submit a request to the campus or student life director at least 48 hours in advance of their visit.
 - D. Classroom visits are permitted only if:
 - a. The visitor is not disruptive to the normal school or learning environment
 - b. The duration or frequency of the visit does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment
 - c. The requested visit is for a school official or parent/guardian and does not involve a third party observing a classroom occupied by students without express permission from all parents/guardians
 - E. Visitors to classrooms must abide by FERPA regulations and their visit must be tied to a legitimate educational purpose. No recordings can be made (auditory or video) of any classroom activities.

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. § 123B.02 (General Powers of Independent School Districts)

Minn. Stat. § 128C.08 (Assaulting a Sports Official Prohibited)

Minn. Stat. § 609.605, Subd. 4 (Trespasses on School Property)

Cross References:

MSA Policy #121 (Communication, Language, and Accessibility)

Procedure #2301
Category: MSA Board
Title: INTERVIEWS/RECOMMENDATIONS - MSA BOARD CANDIDATES
Date of Initial Approval: 12-05-2019
Revision/Reauthorization Dates:
Reviewers: MSAB/MSAD Site Councils

I. PURPOSE

This procedure is to establish a clear and consistent procedure for MSAB/MSAD Site Council members to interview and recommend candidates for vacant positions on the MSA Board to the Governor's Office.

**Although the site councils are tasked with recommending candidates to the governor's office, the governor is ultimately responsible for the final selection and appointment of candidates to the board and may or may not take the site council's recommendations into consideration.*

II. OVERVIEW

According to *Minnesota Statute 125A.62, Subd.6*, the site councils may make a recommendation to the governor regarding board appointments no more than 30 days after receiving the list of applicants from the governor. Although we no longer receive a list of applicants from the governor or follow any deadlines for recommendations, this procedure clarifies the steps that the site councils need to follow to make this recommendation.

III. PROCEDURE

All candidates must submit their application for board positions through the Secretary of State's website. When applications are posted, notifications are sent to the governor's office and the Superintendent's Executive Aide. After a twenty-one (21) day posting, the superintendent's executive aide will examine application materials to ensure that candidates meet minimum requirements for the position. After the 21-day period, the superintendent's executive aide will redact any personally identifying information from the application materials (e.g., home addresses, email addresses, phone numbers) before forwarding them to the members of each campus' site council.

Multiple Candidates:

- A. If there is more than one candidate for a board vacancy, the chairs will convene to select a date/time for a joint session of both campuses' site councils (usually the first site council meeting in January). The chairs will work with the superintendent's office to contact candidates and establish plans for interviews, either in person or via videoconferencing. Chairs are responsible for developing questions (5 questions at the most) with input from site council members. The same questions must be asked of all candidates.
- B. During the joint session, the superintendent will ask questions (~~Appendix A~~) towards each candidate. Other site council members may ask additional follow-up questions as necessary. Follow-up questions should be for clarification only. ~~If members wish to ask~~

~~additional questions other than the questions listed in Appendix A, the questions should be added prior to the first interview and included in the interview for all candidates. At the end of each interview, the site council members must rate the candidates (Appendix B or alternative ways to document information), documenting observations and ranking of the candidates' answers to questions.~~

- C. After all interviews are completed, **both site councils** will meet **jointly** and discuss their observations, thoughts, and recommendations. After ample time has been provided for discussion, the site councils will jointly select one candidate to recommend to the governor's office as the most qualified and viable candidate to fill a vacancy on the MSA Board.
- D. Upon selection, the chairs will **communicate the site councils' complete the recommendation (Appendix C) and return it** to the superintendent's executive aide for transmission to the governor's office.

Single Candidate:

- A. If there is only one candidate for a board vacancy, the chairs of each campus' site council will add an item to the next site council agenda to determine if the site councils want to proceed with the interview or jointly agree to proceed with recommendation without an interview.
- B. If both site councils agree to proceed without an interview, they may complete a recommendation stating that they have reviewed the candidate's resume and qualifications and have determined to recommend that candidate without an interview ~~(Appendix D)~~. If one of the site councils prefers to have an interview, then both site councils will follow the interview procedure outlined above.
- C. It is encouraged that the site councils establish an opportunity for first-time applicants to meet with the members, even if an interview is not necessary.

The site council members must make their recommendations by considering the qualifications/requirements for each board vacancy, the expectations for each position on the board, and ensuring that new members are able to promote academic standards based on high expectation and an assessment system to measure academic performance toward the achievement of those standards... and focus on the academies' needs as a whole and not prefer one school over the other. (MN. Statute 125.62, subd.1)

The site council members are not required to recommend a candidate (even if there is only one candidate). They may opt to abstain from any recommendations or reject a candidate and request an extension of the posting.

Out of State Travel

MSAD Senior Trip

Staff: Jessica Oldfather and 1 paraprofessional (TBD), 4 students

Date: May 21, 2026

Event: Senior Trip, Apostle Islands National Park, WI

Justification: This is an annual event and will be a day trip for MSAD seniors. There will be no lodging as Apostle Islands is within driving distance, and staff will drive the MSA state vehicle. Students will participate in a kayak tour, a cruise tour, and hiking.

Estimated expenses:

- Attraction costs: \$800 (to be covered by senior class fundraisers)
- **Total amount: \$0 (no cost to MSA)**

MSA Staff Professional Development

Staff: Nichelle Steffen

Dates: June 4-6

Event: TSBVI Texas Focus 2026 Conference, Round Rock, TX

Justification: Attending this conference would support Nichelle in strengthening residential leadership and program development for students. The conference offers practical strategies aligned with the Expanded Core Curriculum, particularly in the areas of independence, daily living skills, social development, and inclusive residential practices. It also provides valuable opportunities to collaborate with educators to ensure consistency between instructional goals and residential programming, while gaining insight into emerging best practices that can inform long-term planning, staff training, and overall program quality within the dorm environment.

Estimated expenses:

- Flight: \$400
- Lodging: \$330
- Registration: \$325
- **Total amount: \$1,055 (estimated)**



MINNESOTA STATE ACADEMIES FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

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

Report for the Minnesota State Academies Board – April 2026

Greetings from the Superintendent's Office!

1. Spring is here and things are moving quickly with spring break, activities, field trips, conferences, and end-of-the-year plans. We will be hosting the CEASD conference on April 22-24 and our committee is hard at work with all the details that we need to complete for a successful conference. About 150 participants are expected with a full slate of presenters and break-out sessions. Dr. Sonia Smith from the Minnesota Department of Education will be one of the speakers along with Danelle Gournaris from the Minnesota Commission. It will be a nice opportunity for other states to learn about what we do here in Minnesota.
2. On April 1st, we had our strategic plan retreat with about 20 participants representing different stakeholder groups. Unfortunately, both of our parent representatives were unable to make it on that day, so we are looking at ways to incorporate feedback/input from parents/families before we finalize the plan. A draft of the plan that we developed is attached to this report for your review/input.

We plan to share this plan with our stakeholder groups this week and solicit feedback prior to the site council meeting in May. Afterwards, we will compile feedback and refine the strategic plan draft for your final review/approval in June.

3. We are continuing to work with the Office of the Legislative Auditor to submit follow-up documents and answer questions as they review our responses to the audit findings. Amber Miller and her staff have been busy with all the required documentation and ensuring that the OLA auditors have what they need to complete their work.
4. On April 28th, COGNIA will be meeting with administrators, students, and staff to follow up with the self-study and action plans that we submitted as part of our accreditation review. They will send a comprehensive report to us after their visits with the stakeholder groups, and we will share an update with the board and the MSA community as soon as we hear from them.
5. Some upcoming events that you may be interested in:
 - a. MSAB Drama Club performance (new activity for MSAB!): April 30th at 10 a.m.
 - b. MSAD Prom – Grand March: May 1st at 4 p.m.
 - c. MSAB Prom – Grand March: May 7th at 4 p.m.
 - d. MSAB Graduation: May 28th at 9 a.m.
 - e. MSAD Graduation: May 28th at 11 a.m.

Thank you for your continued support.

Terry Wilding
Superintendent
Minnesota State Academies

The Power of CommUNITY

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



MINNESOTA STATE ACADEMIES FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

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Director of Student Support Services Report Spring FY26

Dated: April 8, 2026

Submitted by: Brittany Thomforde, Director of Student Support Services

Overview/Summary

During the Spring FY26 reporting period, the Student Support Services (SSS) Department has continued to focus on high quality service delivery, due process fidelity, and interdisciplinary collaboration across campuses. Building on the work outlined in the Fall FY26 report, the department has emphasized consistency in documentation and procedures, staff support and development, and systems refinement to ensure compliance with state and federal requirements while meeting students' individualized needs.

The department remains committed to maintaining student centered services that promote access, communication, independence, and educational progress for all learners.

Student Services Data

2025-2026 Due Process Meetings

- Re-evaluations: 29
 - FBAs: 4
- IEP Team Meetings held to date: 124
 - Yet to be held between now and end of year: 25
- IEP Amendments: 28

Due process timelines continue to be closely monitored to ensure compliance with IDEA and Minnesota Department of Education requirements. Ongoing internal reviews support accurate documentation and timely completion of evaluations, meetings, and service delivery.

MSA ESY Update:

- Referrals:
 - MSAB: 28
 - MSAD: 7
- Current MSA Students confirmed to attend:
 - MSAB: 27
 - MSAD: 33

Deadline for both referrals and MSA confirming attendance for ESY is April 15, 2026.

Staffing and Personnel Updates

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



MINNESOTA STATE ACADEMIES FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

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Staffing Status:

The department continues to monitor staffing needs across disciplines. Recruitment and retention of qualified related service providers remains an ongoing statewide challenge, with efforts focused on early identification of vacancies and strategic planning for continuity of services.

- School Social Worker: hired. Beginning Summer 2026
- Speech and Language Pathologist: Offer made to a candidate

Closing Statement

The Student Support Services Department remains dedicated to providing equitable, compliant, and student centered services that support academic growth, communication, and independence. Through continued collaboration, professional learning, and system improvement, the department is well positioned to conclude FY26 and prepare for the upcoming school year.

Minnesota State Academies

Health Services – April 2026 Board Report

School Year 2025-26 Health Services Activities Overview

- Health Services maintains a health office on each campus staffed with licensed nurses. Routine functions include: medication administration and management, health procedures as prescribed, managing student illness, injury, or other health concerns, supporting emergency response and care coordination.
- Throughout the school year, Health Services Nursing at MSA works to ensure comprehensive support for student health needs through continuous updates to emergency plans, medication orders, health records, and documentation systems. Collaboration occurs with parents/guardians, healthcare providers, school staff, dorm personnel, paraprofessionals and service providers to address individual student health requirements.
- Health Services Nursing actively participates in Individualized Education Program (IEP) reviews and three-year evaluations along with administration and other service providers to help ensure inclusion of all necessary nursing and health-related services, Personal Care Assistant (PCA) support, and program supervision/training.

School Health Services Nursing Snapshot

MSAB:

- 43% (22 students) have emergency health plans
- 49% (25 students) require PCA services/ADL support
- 1 student requires 1:1 nursing care
- 75% (38 students) receive direct/indirect school health services

MSAD:

- 19% (16 students) have emergency health plans
- 9% (8 students) require PCA services/Activities of Daily Living (ADL) support
- 2 students requires 1:1 nursing care
- 31% (26 students) receive direct/indirect school health services

Training and Compliance

- Annual First Aid/CPR/AED training for designated staff
- Annual and ongoing training on medication administration, emergency protocols, infection control, seizure response, Health Services processes and expectations and student-specific emergency plans
- AEDs maintained monthly (12 at MSAD, 4 at MSAB)
- Annual Student Immunization Report submitted to MDH
- On-site flu clinics hosted annually at both campuses in coordination with MMB and Homeland Health.

Third Party Reimbursement

- MSA seeks Medicaid reimbursement for eligible health-related services provided during the school day. Services include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech, audiology, mental health (CTSS), nursing/school health services, PCA services, and interpreter services.
- The Third Party Billing (TPB) Coordinator, Emma Hua, RN, oversees compliance with program guidelines, staff training, documentation review, billing submission, reconciliation, and budget management. TPB processes also include provider exclusion checks, care plan reviews, service supervisions, and coordination with the TPB Funds Committee.

Minnesota Statutes Specific to Medicaid Covered IEP Services:

- 125A.21 Minnesota Statute: Third Party Payment
- 125A.74 Minnesota Statute: Medical Assistance Payment to School Districts
- 125A.744 Minnesota Statute: Statewide Data Management System to Maximize Medical Assistance Reimbursement
- 256B.0625_subd.26 Minnesota Statute: Covered Services – Special Education

Submitted 4/7/26: Kimberly Viskocil LSN/RN - Health Services Director



MINNESOTA STATE ACADEMIES FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

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Physical Plant Board report: April, 2026

Staff of the Department: Department Head, Dan Haugen

1 OAS. Mary Lipinski, **1** Central Stores, Mike Nelson

1 Carpenter, Andrew Nordquest, **1** Master Electrician, Jeff Trnka

2 Plant Maintenance Engineers. Gene Prichard & Eric Mullenmeister

2 General Repair workers, Joel Schema & Brian Starkson

2 Grounds workers, Jacob Deml & Christian Deaton

5 Day shift GMW (General Maintenance Workers) Mark Jakala, Alex Clark, Chris Carlson, Terry Houglum, New Hire

4 Second Shift GMW staff, Darcy David, Lead GMW, Tyler Adams, Matt Knutson, Suzanne Deaton

Too often I just talk about the projects and overlook the people keeping the facility running. We are listed as having 423,000 square feet, in 19 buildings, 2 campuses. I acknowledge that some of those buildings are not fully used but they still require oversight by my staff to keep them safe and limit degradation.

As well as the full-time staff we have 4 intermittent drivers which keep the buses running for the many activity trips which the students take each week.

Project List:

Contractor Projects:

- 1) Rodman Freezer Project, complete but working through punch list items. Contractor failing to meet our expectations as operating temp is not being met and condenser is frosting over.
- 2) FTA – ADA lift, had delays due to plan review, Found differences between old prints and actual building structure. Lift install scheduled for the week of April 20th. Should be ready for graduation deadline.
- 3) Smith & Quinn BMS system upgrades, Project complete but working through punch list items.
- 4) Tate Plumbing emergency work, had to repair a 4-inch drain line running between the crawl space and the attic servicing the senior apartment. Work required walls and floor to be opened, once the leak was fixed, it was no longer an emergency, and we sit with torn open walls and floor.
- 5) Quinn classroom Chaulk boards, they were scheduled to be replaced during security corridor project, contractor could not provide proper product, we took a refund which was decided to be used for sliding doors, MSA staff will remove the half wall and build an area for shelving which the doors will conceal. Scheduled once school is out.
- 6) Dorm project, finishing up pre-design after which the contractor will move into schematic design for the MSAB dorms only. Hoping to start construction work in the summer of 2026. Pollard at MSAD will likely be the second phase since funds are likely not sufficient.

7) Greenhouse, I have lined up contractor for the foundation waiting on funding,

Campus needs:

- Electrical switch replacement in Smith building.
- Tree removal, number of Ash trees have died in spite of treatment.
- Tree replacement, would like 10 -15 per year
- Sidewalk leveling and replacement
- Parking lot repairs, number of areas where asphalt failing
- Tunnel pipe insulation
- Tuck- pointing various buildings on campus
- MSAB Library remodel
- Fire Alarm system upgrade
- Campus wide security film on windows
- Campus sewer lining or replacement
- Generator switch upgrade
- Sealing east wall of Gym, moisture and mold issue
- Rooftop replacement over MSAB Gym.
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MSA Student Life- Board Report

April 2026

Nichelle Steffen, Director of Student Life

2025-2026 Updates



Residential & ASP Students:

- MSAB: 20 Residential Students
- MSAD: 38 Residential Students
- After School Program: 12 Day Students

Activities Programming Objectives

- **Program Objective#1: Expanded Learning Experiences**

Provide engaging opportunities that broaden students' horizons by introducing new experiences, strengthening social skills and language development, and fostering independence and confidence.

- Pottery with Holly - MSAB
- Timberwolves Game - MSAD
- Sustainable Safari - MSAB & MSAD
- Great Wolf Lodge - MSAB & MSAD



- **Program Objective#2: Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Programming**

Ensure all activities are welcoming, accessible, and inclusive of our diverse student body by adapting experiences so every student can fully participate and see their culture, identity, and lived experiences represented.

- Recognizing Black History Month, Women's History Month, Autism Awareness, and so on.

- **Program Objective#3: Community Engagement and Service**
Build meaningful connections with the broader community and service-learning initiatives that promote civic responsibility and empathy.
 - Faribault & Northfield Winterfests
 - Ice Skating with SSM ASL students
 - Cooking Lefse with an Alumnae- Maya
 - State Services for the Blind Workshops
 - Combines MSAB and MSAD events

Major Upcoming Events

- MSAD Prom - May 1st
- MSAB Prom - May 7th
- Student Life Bash - May 21st



Staff Development Opportunities



MSAD Staff Training:

- Mental Health Training with Tyler Russell from VONA
- Weight Lifting Training with Ryan Smith-Hastings
- AI Training & Discussion
- Support for Hard of Hearing students Discussion with Katie Letourneau and Matt Kevan

MSAB Staff Training:

- Mental Health Training with Tyler Russell from VONA
- Student Emergency Plan Review with Emma Hua
- Blind Awareness Workshop
- IEP Training with Hope Miller

Current Staffing:

- At MSAD, Julia Forti is serving as the Interim Activities Coordinator, ensuring continuity of the educationally focused After School Program (ASP), while Auna Ortiz is out on leave.
- New Hire:
 - **Heidi Freeberg** - Evening Residential Educator (MSAD)
 - **Nash Dushek**- Evening Residential Educator (MSAB)
 - **Ariana Hagel**- Evening Residential Educator (MSAB) *Starting April 22nd*
- Current Positions Open:
 - 2 (36 hour) HST Residential Educator (MSAD)



**Minnesota State Academies
Financial Report-FY26
July 1, 2025-March 31, 2026**

75% of Fiscal Year Expended

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

General Fund-1000 Fund	FY 2025 Expended	Current FY26 Budget	FY26 YTD Expended	Available Budget FY26	Percent Expended-FY26
Payroll-MSAD	\$5,270,109.96	\$5,611,996.00	\$3,843,678.13	\$1,768,317.87	68.49%
Non Payroll-MSAD	\$355,500.48	\$379,784.00	\$232,711.69	\$147,072.31	61.27%
Payroll-MSAB	\$3,307,320.57	\$3,658,724.00	\$2,436,273.18	\$1,222,450.82	66.59%
Non Payroll-MSAB	\$227,170.75	\$246,684.00	\$117,266.10	\$129,417.90	47.54%
Payroll-Shared Svs	\$4,773,221.17	\$5,358,569.59	\$3,727,325.35	\$1,631,244.24	69.56%
Non Payroll-Shared Svs	\$2,931,910.40	\$2,656,544.64	\$1,649,365.44	\$1,007,179.20	62.09%
R&R-Non Payroll	\$250,000.00	\$258,699.16	\$227,327.14	\$31,372.02	87.87%
Payroll-Mental Health Day Treatment Prog (NEW)	\$4,786.88	\$144,167.48	\$68,321.37	\$75,846.11	47.39%
Non Payroll-Mental Health Day Treatment Prog (NEW)	\$83,450.73	\$342,619.27	\$13,500.99	\$329,118.28	3.94%
Unemployment Insurance (New in FY24)	\$163,006.68	\$321,000.00	\$259,007.09	\$61,992.91	80.69%
Total 1000 Fund	\$17,366,477.62	\$18,978,788.14	\$12,574,776.48	\$6,404,011.66	66.26%

**1000 Fund Expended FY25 as of March 31, 2025
\$11,352,103.40**

**Payroll Allocation 62%
Non Payroll Allocation 38%**

Restricted Misc Special Revenue Fund-2000 Fund	FY 2025 Expended	Current FY26 Budget	FY26 YTD Expended	Available Budget FY26	Percent Expended-FY26
Payroll-MSAD	\$4,348.27	\$575.52	\$575.52	\$0.00	0.00%
Non Payroll-MSAD	\$20,087.60	\$52,460.46	\$15,027.89	\$37,432.57	28.65%
Payroll-MSAB	\$11,444.36	\$164,326.23	\$9,578.36	\$154,747.87	5.83%
Non Payroll-MSAB	\$5,884.72	\$544,857.72	\$30,999.64	\$513,858.08	5.69%
Payroll-Shared Svs	\$190,426.47	\$200,409.27	\$144,528.74	\$55,880.53	72.12%
Non Payroll-Shared Svs	\$81,498.26	\$2,193,310.58	\$48,195.84	\$2,145,114.74	2.20%
Total 2000 Fund	\$313,689.68	\$3,155,939.78	\$248,905.99	\$2,907,033.79	7.89%

**2000 Fund Expended FY25 as of March 31, 2025
\$235,682.76**

Minnesota State Academies
Financial Report-FY26
July 1, 2025-March 31, 2026

75% of Fiscal Year Expended

Payroll Allocation 97%
Non Payroll Allocation 3%

Other Misc Special Revenue Fund-2001 Fund	FY 2025 Expended	Current FY26 Budget	FY26 YTD Expended	Available Budget FY26	Percent Expended-FY26
Payroll-MSAD	\$1,714,533.04	\$1,987,596.73	\$1,430,583.75	\$557,012.98	71.98%
Non Payroll-MSAD	\$1,056.17	\$697,203.23	\$523.31	\$696,679.92	0.08%
Payroll-MSAB	\$2,163,482.66	\$2,251,132.36	\$1,921,305.06	\$329,827.30	85.35%
Non Payroll-MSAB	\$1,948.72	\$868,359.56	\$1,713.44	\$866,646.12	0.20%
Payroll-Shared Svs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Non Payroll-Shared Svs	\$91,982.49	\$1,170,091.05	\$95,656.14	\$1,074,434.91	8.18%
Total 2001 Fund	\$3,973,003.08	\$6,974,382.93	\$3,449,781.70	\$3,524,601.23	49.46%

2001 Fund Expended FY25 as of March 31, 2025
\$2,978,439.05

Non Payroll Allocation 100%

Endowment Fund-2400 Fund	FY 2025 Expended	Current FY26 Budget	FY26 YTD Expended	Available Budget FY26	Percent Expended-FY26
Non Payroll-MSAD	\$9.64	\$7,257.67	\$4.32	\$7,253.35	0.06%
Total 2400 Fund	\$9.64	\$7,257.67	\$4.32	\$7,253.35	0.06%

2400 Fund Expended FY25 as of March 31 2025
\$7.23

Non Payroll Allocation 100%

Gift Fund-2403 Fund	FY 2025 Expended	Current FY26 Budget	FY26 YTD Expended	Available Budget FY26	Percent Expended-FY26
Non Payroll-MSAD	\$26,699.39	\$201,391.47	\$9,280.18	\$192,111.29	4.61%
Non Payroll-MSAB	\$47,403.58	\$562,642.22	\$28,034.22	\$534,608.00	4.98%
Total 2403 Fund	\$74,102.97	\$764,033.69	\$37,314.40	\$726,719.29	4.88%

2403 Fund Expended FY25 as of March 31, 2025
\$57,406.50

**Minnesota State Academies
Financial Report-FY26
July 1, 2025-March 31, 2026**

75% of Fiscal Year Expended

**Payroll Allocation 85%
Non Payroll Allocation 15%**

Federal Fund-3000 Fund	FY 2025 Expended	Current FY26 Budget	FY26 YTD Expended	Available Budget FY26	Percent Expended-FY26
Payroll-MSAD	\$127,394.84	\$127,223.82	\$123,017.33	\$4,206.49	96.69%
Non Payroll-MSAD	\$25,130.39	\$35,145.30	\$15,757.29	\$19,388.01	44.83%
Payroll-MSAB	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Non Payroll-MSAB	\$17,956.17	\$19,000.00	\$15,190.54	\$3,809.46	79.95%
Payroll-Shared Svs	\$80,944.63	\$78,312.91	\$58,747.56	\$19,565.35	75.02%
Non Payroll-Shared Svs	\$70,646.49	\$115,935.37	\$0.00	\$115,935.37	0.00%
Total 3000 Fund	\$322,072.52	\$375,617.40	\$212,712.72	\$162,904.68	56.63%

**3000 Fund Expended FY25 as of March 31, 2025
\$274,151.27**

Non Payroll Allocation 100%

Misc Agency Fund-6000 Fund	FY 2025 Expended	Current FY26 Budget	FY26 YTD Expended	Available Budget FY26	Percent Expended-FY26
Non Payroll-MSAD	\$109,704.89	\$193,848.52	\$71,571.40	\$122,277.12	36.92%
Non Payroll-MSAB	\$19,246.85	\$35,541.30	\$8,867.79	\$26,673.51	24.95%
Total 6000 Fund	\$128,951.74	\$229,389.82	\$80,439.19	\$148,950.63	35.07%

**6000 Fund Expended FY25 as of March 31, 2025
\$77,580.62**

Total All Funds	\$22,178,307.25	\$30,485,409.43	\$16,603,934.80	\$13,881,474.63	54.47%
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Minnesota State Academies
 Financial Report-FY26
 July 1, 2025-March 31, 2026

75% of Fiscal Year Expended

Payroll Allocation
 Non Payroll Allocation

64%
 36%

Revenue and Expenditure Summary	Fiscal Year 25 School Year 2024-25	Fiscal Year 26 School Year 2025-2026			
	Expended	Allocation	Expended	Available	Cash on Hand
General Fund (1000)	\$17,366,477.62	\$18,978,788.14	\$12,574,776.48	\$6,404,011.66	\$6,404,011.66
Special Restricted (2000)	\$313,689.68	\$3,155,939.78	\$248,905.99	\$2,907,033.79	\$2,907,033.79
Other Mscl (2001)	\$3,973,003.08	\$6,974,382.93	\$3,449,781.70	\$3,524,601.23	\$1,912,079.00
Endowment (2400)	\$9.64	\$7,257.67	\$4.32	\$7,253.35	\$7,253.35
Gift (2403)	\$74,102.97	\$764,033.69	\$37,314.40	\$726,719.29	\$726,719.29
Federal (3000)	\$322,072.52	\$375,617.40	\$212,712.72	\$162,904.68	\$17,044.00
Agency Fund (6000)	\$128,951.74	\$229,389.82	\$80,439.19	\$148,950.63	\$148,950.63
Totals	\$22,178,307.25	\$30,485,409.43	\$16,603,934.80	\$13,881,474.63	\$12,123,091.72

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.



Minnesota State Academies for the Deaf and Blind

DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2029

April 1, 2026



OVERVIEW

2026–2029 Strategic Plan | Executive Overview

The Minnesota State Academies of the Deaf and Blind is entering a defining chapter, building on a strong legacy while setting a clear direction for the future.

In Fall 2025, MSA partnered with Dr. Dave Webb and Homerun Leadership to guide the development of a focused and forward-looking three-year strategic plan. The MSA Board of Directors established clear priorities to ensure the plan reflects both current strengths and future opportunities.

Throughout the 2025–2026 school year, MSA engaged students, staff, families, alumni, and community partners through 12 stakeholder sessions across both campuses. This process affirmed deep pride in MSA’s student-centered mission, culture, and accessibility, while also identifying key areas for growth, including communication, organizational alignment, enrollment, staff stability, and facilities.

A Strategic Planning Committee refined these insights into a clear and actionable framework, resulting in the 2026–2029 Strategic Plan.

The 2026–2029 Strategic Plan builds on MSA’s legacy while directly addressing those priorities.

Over the next three years, MSA will focus on four strategic goals:

1. Academic Excellence & Student Outcomes
2. Statewide Outreach, Visibility & Engagement
3. Staff Excellence, Stability & Accountability
4. Safe, Modern & Accessible Facilities

This plan emphasizes measurable results, annual accountability, and transparent reporting. Each goal includes clear Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will be reviewed quarterly and reported publicly each year.

By 2029, MSA will be recognized as:

- A unified statewide leader in accessible education
- A growing and thriving residential and outreach program.
- A high-performing organization grounded in accountability.
- A school community where students achieve independence and belonging.

This plan is designed to drive measurable progress every year.

Minnesota State Academies for the Deaf and the Blind

There were 12 Stakeholder feedback sessions with students, families, instructional staff, dorm staff, non-instructional staff, alumni, community members, board members, and cross-campus groups.

After conducting feedback sessions, across all 12 groups, consistent themes emerged:

Celebrations

- Strong pride in students, with long-term students demonstrating impressive literacy growth
- Student-centered environment supported by specialized services
- Highly specialized, talented staff with rare and expert skill sets
- Confident, knowledgeable staff with deep expertise in their fields
- Strong, caring, mission-driven staff culture
- Deep culture and identity, including Deaf culture, Braille literacy, ECC, and bilingual ASL/English
- Strong sense of family, especially within the deaf school community
- High staff commitment and retention, with many returning and investing in the school
- Supportive environment where individuals look out for one another.
- Positive, collaborative team culture across the organization
- Strong teamwork within departments
- Overall perception of a strong, effective team
- Established statewide legacy and strong reputation

Challenges

- Enhancing communication (internal, cross-campus, family, alumni, crisis communication)
- Ensuring accountability and follow-through
- Increasing enrollment and improving public visibility
- Improving staff retention – addressing burnout and stability
- Growth in cross-campus equity and collaboration
- Focus on mental health and behavior support.
- Maintenance and upgrade of facilities and infrastructure (HVAC, dorms, accessibility upgrades)

What follows is a Three-year Strategic Framework (2026–2029) grounded in stakeholder voice and aligned to the original “Achieve, Care, Thrive” spirit, but modernized around clarity, accountability, and growth.

DRAFT STRATEGIC MISSION

(Updated MSA Draft Mission): Minnesota State Academies empowers students through accessible, inclusive, and language-rich education to maximize their potential, preparing them to thrive in school and life.

MSA provides statewide resources and professional expertise to parents, families, partners, and educational programs in Minnesota.

DRAFT STRATEGIC VISION

(Updated MSA Draft Vision): MSA empowers every student to achieve, care, and thrive.

DRAFT CORE VALUES (Updated MSA Core Values 4/1/26)

- 1. Student-Centered Excellence:** Every decision prioritizes student learning, growth, independence, and well-being across academics, social development, and life skills.
- 2. Accessibility & Language Equity:** Full access through ASL, Braille, assistive technology, and inclusive practices ensure that every student can fully participate and succeed.
- 3. Belonging & Identity:** We honor culture, identity, and diverse lived experiences by creating inclusive opportunities for students to engage in academic, social, and extracurricular experiences.
- 4. Collaboration & Statewide Impact:** We are one agency across two campuses, partnering with families, districts, and statewide stakeholders to expand access, share expertise, and strengthen outcomes.
- 5. Family & Community Partnership:** Families, alumni, community members, school districts, and statewide partners are valued collaborators in supporting student success.



FOUR STRATEGIC Draft GOALS (2026–2029)

1. Academic Excellence & Student Outcomes: MSA will deliver rigorous, accessible, and culturally responsive instruction supported by aligned systems, clear communication, and data-driven practices to ensure student growth, independence, and post-school success.

2. Statewide Outreach, Visibility & Engagement: MSA will expand statewide outreach, visibility, and engagement through coordinated communication systems, strong partnerships, and accessible, inclusive engagement with families, districts, and community stakeholders.

3. Staff Excellence, Stability & Accountability: MSA will build a high-performing, aligned workforce through clear expectations, strong communication systems, and structures that support accountability, collaboration, and staff well-being.

4. Safe, Modern & Accessible Facilities: MSA will ensure safe, accessible, and modern environments supported by strong infrastructure, reliable technology, and clear communication systems that enhance safety, learning, and daily operations.



DRAFT GOAL #1: Academic Excellence & Student Outcomes

MSA will deliver rigorous, accessible, and culturally responsive instruction supported by aligned systems, clear communication, and data-driven practices to ensure student growth, independence, and post-school success.

Draft Goal #1 Action Strategies:

1.1 Align Curriculum, Instruction, and Standards

- Conduct curriculum audit and alignment
- Ensure ASL bilingual integrity and Braille/ECC alignment with state standards
- Identify and address gaps
- Provide training and instructional support
- Ensure consistent implementation

1.2 Strengthen Staff Expertise & Professional Learning

- Ongoing professional development
- Targeted training (e.g., behavior support, PBIS, differentiated instruction)
- Certification opportunities
- Instructional coaching and continuous learning systems

1.3 Implement a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

- Develop MTSS across academics, behavior, and social-emotional supports
- Establish intervention tiers and progress monitoring
- Use data to inform decisions

1.4 Strengthen Behavioral, Mental Health, and Student Life Supports

- Examine behavior and discipline systems
- PBIS across classrooms and residential settings
- Mental health access
- Strategic staffing adjustments

1.5 Expand Course Offerings & Student Pathways

- Explore additional electives (e.g., STEM, Fine Arts)
- CTE and vocational programming
- Transition programming (14–22) with emphasis on both college and career pathways

1.6 Strengthen Data, Assessment & Accountability Systems

- Standardized growth metrics
- Regular data review cycles
- Annual outcomes report
- IEP compliance monitoring

1.7 Position Academic Excellence as the Driver of Enrollment & Growth

- Share outcomes and success stories
- Align outreach with academic results

1.8 Strengthen Internal Communication for Instructional Alignment

- Establish clear communication protocols across instructional teams
- Define roles and expectations for decision-making and student support
- Use shared platforms for collaboration, data sharing, and instructional alignment

DRAFT GOAL #2: Statewide Outreach, Visibility & Engagement

MSA will expand statewide outreach, visibility, and engagement through coordinated communication systems, strong partnerships, and accessible, inclusive engagement with families, districts, and community stakeholders.

Draft Goal #2 Action Strategies:

2.1 Expand Statewide Outreach & Access to Services

- Increase outreach efforts in rural and underserved regions
- Develop a statewide support model for educators
- Provide virtual learning opportunities for families
- Expand Deaf/Blind support services across the state

2.2 Strengthen Educational Programming as the Foundation for Outreach

- Align outreach efforts with high-quality academic, social, life, and transition programming
- Showcase educational expertise and student outcomes through outreach
- Ensure programming reflects best practices

2.3 Launch a Family & Stakeholder Engagement Framework

- Annual town halls (1 in-person, 1 virtual)
- Web-based communication tools for families and stakeholders
- Strategies to engage families from diverse backgrounds and languages
- Ongoing feedback opportunities

2.4 Increase Visibility & Public Awareness

- Develop and maintain an accessible, professional website
- Implement a consistent social media strategy
- Share regular spotlight stories
- Strengthening public relations and legislative engagement

2.5 Strengthen Partnerships & Statewide Relationships

- Expand relationships with districts and stakeholder groups
- Build partnerships to support learning and service delivery
- Increase collaboration with Deaf, Blind, and Deaf/Blind organizations

2.6 Establish a Comprehensive External Communication System

- Define communication expectations: who communicates what, when, and to whom
- Develop stakeholder-specific communication matrix
- Ensure consistent messaging across platforms and campuses
- Ensure all communication is accessible (ASL, Braille, translations, inclusive formats)

2.7 Measure & Improve Communication Effectiveness

- Continuing to conduct annual satisfaction surveys
- Use feedback to refine outreach, engagement, and communication strategies

DRAFT GOAL #3: Staff Excellence, Stability & Accountability

MSA will build a high-performing, aligned workforce through clear expectations, strong communication systems, and structures that support accountability, collaboration, and staff well-being.

Draft Goal #3 Action Strategies:

3.1 Strengthen Onboarding & Staff Training Systems

- Structured onboarding program for all staff
- Pre-service training aligned to essential skills
- Clear expectations for roles and performance
- First-year support systems

3.2 Establish Clear Expectations, Accountability & Staff Consistency

- Review roles, schedules, and responsibilities
- Consistent performance reviews
- Strengthening accountability systems
- Improve attendance and reliability

3.3 Deepen Professional Learning & Ongoing Support

- Targeted training aligned to needs
- ASL proficiency training for non-signing staff as appropriate
- PBIS and behavior training
- Coaching, PLCs, and follow-up support

3.4 Support Staff Well-Being & Sustainable Work Systems

- Review staffing structures and workload for instructional staff
- Ensure equitable prep time
- Address burnout systemically

3.5 Strengthen Instructional Leadership & Monitoring Systems

- Increase classroom observations
- Provide actionable feedback
- Use observation data for improvement

3.6 Implement a Unified Internal Communication System

- Review and standardize communication expectations and protocols across campuses
- Monthly all-staff updates
- Shared documentation and collaboration systems

DRAFT GOAL #4: Safe, Modern & Accessible Facilities

MSA will ensure safe, accessible, and modern environments supported by strong infrastructure, reliable technology, and clear communication systems that enhance safety, learning, and daily operations.

Draft Goal #4 Action Strategies:

4.1 Strengthen Campus Safety & Emergency Systems

- Conduct safety and emergency audits
- Enhance lockdown and visual communication systems
- Ensure regular drills and monitoring systems
- Define roles and protocols for emergency response

4.2 Conduct Facilities Audit & Capital Improvement Planning

- Comprehensive facilities audit
- Develop phased improvement plan
- Align facility needs with funding and legislative priorities
- Increase transparency on plans and timelines

4.3 Advance Accessibility & Innovation in Campus Design

- Integrate innovative accessibility features
- Model best practices for Deaf, Blind, DeafBlind environments
- Continuously improve accessibility

4.4 Strengthen Technology Infrastructure & IT Systems

- Examine current Wi-Fi access (including evenings/residential) and address dead zones
- Improve IT support responsiveness
- Strengthen safety and filtering systems

4.5 Establish Maintenance, Monitoring & Sustainability Systems

- Define maintenance expectations
- Establish and communicate inspection cycles and preventative maintenance
- Replacement timelines
- Continuous monitoring and improvement

4.6 Strengthen Crisis & Operational Communication Systems

- Multi-modal emergency communication (visual, text, email)
- Clear chain of command across campuses
- Ongoing review and improvement of communication during drills and real events

Implementation Structure

- 3-Year Plan (2026–2029)
- Annual Action Plan Review
- Quarterly Progress Dashboard
- Public Annual Report

Strategic Focus Shift from 2018–2023 Plan

The previous plan emphasized systems creation and school climate.

The 2026–2029 plan shifts toward:

- Measurable accountability
- Enrollment growth
- Cross-campus unity
- Staff retention
- Visible leadership
- Public visibility
- Facilities modernization



MSAB Site Council Meeting Draft Minutes

The meeting of the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind Site Council was held on Thursday, March 5, 2026, beginning at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Member Attendance (Present):

Harold Weber, Marie Reisdorfer, Zena Anderson, Madeline Christensen, Sheila Koenig, Stephanie Franek.

Ex Officio Members (Present): Terry Wilding, Justin Cyboron, Lance Hall, Nichelle Steffen, Brittany Thomforde.

Welcome and Roll Call – Everyone was welcomed to the MSAB Site Council Meeting. Harry opened the meeting at 2:05 p.m.

1. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Madeline Christensen, seconded by Zena Anderson, to approve the February 5, 2026, MSAB Site Council meeting minutes. Motion was carried with all in favor.

2. Reports

A. Superintendent Report

- Strategic Plan Meetings with the different stakeholders, including teaching staff, students, families, community, etc. have been completed. We gathered and collected data from those meetings. On April 1st, we will have a strategic planning review team review all the feedback and information that was gathered and try to narrow that down to make 3-4 school goals for the next 3 years. Will be brought back to the Site Council for review.
- Dorm Project – we have a meeting next week Wednesday, however, the predesign for the Blind School has been finished, we are now moving towards the construction documents for the bids. The goal is to start construction sometime this summer.
- The legislative session has begun for this year; we've got a better financial outlook. I met with the Senate Capital Investment Committee last week, presented to them and explained our request. Next Thursday, I will meet with the House Capital Investment Committee. We have 3 proposals on the table this year for the legislature to consider:
 - i. Predesign money for a student center at MSAD
 - ii. Replace pool at MSAB
 - iii. Asset preservation, keeping up our grounds and buildings
- We are still waiting for the legislature to set up a target number for their bonding bill this year, not sure of the size of the bill.

- Justin Cyboron will be working on accreditation for both schools. Currently working on gathering data and feeding that into the system to get ready for their visit in April.

B. MSAD Director Report

- We currently have 48 students. Possibly 4 new students for next year.
- Cogna Accreditation visit is April 28th, 2026.
- Our Extended School Year Program will be July 13-30 from 8:00 am – 2:00 pm.
- Literacy Night will be held virtually on March 18th.
- Our Artist in Residency will be on campus April 13-17. The students will be making clay, pinch pots
- Spring Mixed Precipitation Group working with middle and high school students during the months of March and April. They will be creating an audio drama that will be posted to our website.
- Short-term Programs include:
 - i. March 9-11 - Focus is on work skills and done in conjunction with SSB.
 - ii. April 13-15 - Focus is on technology/assistive technology.
- Our Annual Triathlon will be held on May 12th.
- MSAB Family Learning Day will be June 8th.
- Spring Program – Choir and Rock Band concert (April 15th at 1:30 pm).
- Drama Club “Character Matters” (April 23rd at 10:00 am)

C. MSA Director of Curriculum

- We currently have 7-8 students registered for our short course programming this month for BVI students.
- This Spring we will be searching for a new Outreach Specialist. Hoping to have someone hired before school starts in the Fall.
- On the MSAD campus we continue to provide in-person ASL Literacy night events, as well as ASL courses with approx. 50-60 families in attendance.
- The Minnesota Resource Library – since our November Board Report, the Library has shared 961 items between Deaf and Blind patrons. In the past month, 355 items have been shared or renewed.
- School Accountability – Since November, the Committee has developed a new 5-year Curriculum Purchasing Cycle. They have also begun work on creating a course catalog for both campuses.
- Professional Development – On-campus trainings provided to staff have included CPR, CPI, Mental Health, and an introduction to MTSS. We have 4 members from the Blind campus that will be taking Phase 1 of the required READ Act training within the next few months. Additional teachers will be required to take Phase 2 training next year.
- Accreditation – John Davis and Justin Cyboron have been working on entering information into Cognia's system and making the necessary arrangements for our site visit at the end of April.
- Statewide Connections – We are currently set to run booths at the Deaf Culture, Language and Creers (DCLC) event, Minnesota Association of school Administrators (MASA) spring conference, Charting the Cs special education conference, and we will be working to support the national Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD) held in Minnesota this Spring.

D. MSA Director of Community Engagement

- Activities & Athletic webpage created. Feedback has been positive.
- Will be attending the Charting the Cs conference, along with the MASA Spring conference.

E. Board Representative from MSAB Site Council

- No report given.

F. Student Body Government

- Prom – May 7th. Official prom meeting will be held this evening.

G. Special Education Director

- We have sent out the information to resident districts for referrals for our Extended School Year program. Deadline for outside referrals is April 15, 2026.

H. Dorm Report

- MSAB Prom is scheduled for May 7th. The prom sponsor will be Hope Jeanes.
- Trip to Great Wolf Lodge was successful.
- Bedbugs – Isolated room found, completed the treatment process, will continue to monitor the situation.

I. Site Council Chair

- Bowling and Swimming have started.
- Spring Mixed Precipitation Group working with middle and high school students during the months of March and April. They will be creating an audio drama that will be posted to our website.
- Our Artist in Residency will be on campus April 13-17. The students will be making clay, pinch pots

3. Old Business

None.

4. New Business

None.

5. Adjourn

A motion was made by Madeline Christensen, seconded by Zena Anderson, to adjourn The MSAB Site Council meeting. The motion was carried with all in favor.

The next Site Council Meeting will be on April 9, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.

MSAD SITE COUNCIL

Location: Online - Zoom Meeting

Date: March 4th, 2026

Member Attendance

- Marianne Loftus (Parent) - **Present**
- Maresa Starr (Student) - **Present**
- Justine Gonzalez (Teacher) - **Present**
- Christine Adams (Student Life) - **Present**
- Jasmine Rademacher (Paraprofessional) - **Present**
- Molly Peters (Shared/Support Services)- **Present**
- Sonny Wasilowski (Alumni/Deaf Community/Deaf Blind Community) - **Present**

Ex Officio Members

- (MADC) - vacant
- (Minnesota Department of Education) - vacant
- Terry Wilding (Superintendent) - Present
- Justin Cyboron (MSA Director of Curriculum and Educational Programs AND the Comprehensive Achievement & Civic Readiness (CACR) annual report) **Present**
- Brittany Thomforde (MSA Director of Student Support Services) - **Present**
- Jason Cox (Director) - **Present**
- Lee Jones (Assistant Director) - **Present**
- Nichelle Steffen (MSA Student Life Director) - **Present**
- Lance Sever-Hall (MSA Director of Community Engagement) **Present**
- Ryan Smith-Hastings (MSAD Athletic Director-optional) - **Present**

1. Welcome and Roll Call

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

The council discussed using shorter, summary-style minutes that highlight key discussions, impacts for board members, and needed actions. Members also revisited the Site Council procedures and bylaws created last year, noting they are still developing. Progress on some motions is slow but ongoing, and the council will continue to monitor and improve their impact.

3. Old Business

The council discussed how to create work groups or committees to review topics before bringing them to the board. For example, topics such as religious or cultural holidays may

require discussion because people have different perspectives. These topics should first go through a policy committee to review procedures and determine how they align with Policy 600: Academic Programs, clarifying what is allowed and what is not.

The elementary department has already begun developing ideas to ensure students are not limited if they want to celebrate cultural or religious holidays. Instead of traditional celebrations, these topics could be integrated into writing, math, reading, and educational activities so students learn and feel included.

The discussion may also move to DEI and ILT teams for further input and recommendations. There was also discussion about differences between the Deaf School and the Blind School policies. Currently, the Blind School allows some celebrations while the Deaf School does not, which raised concerns about equity. Some members noted that students sometimes learn about other beliefs but are not able to celebrate their own.

The council discussed maintaining consistent policies across both campuses and ensuring equal accessibility. Families should receive advance notice and the option to opt out.

The policy will be reviewed in the current handbook and updated before the end of the school year. Feedback will remain open, and adjustments may continue. Updates will be shared with both the Blind and Deaf Site Councils to ensure alignment as policy changes move forward.

4. New Business

The council discussed five statutes related to policy changes, with the most important being enrollment. Enrollment must follow federal requirements to ensure the school continues receiving funding. If policy changes are made, they may need to go through the legislature, which will review the school's financial funding.

There was discussion about the IEP requirement in the handbook, since funding is tied to special education services. If a student enrolls without an IEP and does not need one, the cost would come from the school's budget. Members suggested allowing 504 plans as an option for students who do not qualify for an IEP.

The council also discussed ways to increase enrollment, such as mainstream partnerships, immersion classes, and faster enrollment processing. Out-of-state admissions are allowed but depend on available funding. The Policy Committee will review this policy further, noting that changes will take time.

5. Policy and Procedure Review

The council shared that one policy currently under discussion with the board is about MSA visitors. The policy will clarify who can enter the building and classrooms, the purpose of visits, visitor screening procedures, and limits on the number of visitors allowed in a classroom. This policy is still being developed and reviewed.

6. **Review Written Reports – Comments/Questions (Terry, Britt, Lee, Jason, Lance H, Ryan S-H, Board Rep, SBG, PBIS, Wellness Committee, Site Council Chair, etc.)**
 - a. All submitted reports reviewed and approved
 - b. The website has been expanded with new links, including a Trojans athletics page. There are suggestions to add championship history, school records, awards, and recognitions from NDIAA and other sports organizations. Overall reports were reviewed and looked good.
 - c. There was discussion about a recent alumni and community stakeholder forum. Attendance was small, and some community members were not aware of the event. While it was shared on social media, not everyone uses those platforms. The council will work on improving communication with alumni groups, the Faribault Deaf Club, and the broader community in the future.
 - d. Questions were raised about online classes. These were previously offered but are currently on hold due to staffing and contract issues. Plans are being considered to restart outreach and advertising next year, once a new outreach specialist is hired. The school may also consider hosting an open house during ESY or before fall registration. Online ASL classes for families are still available.
 - e. For dorm activities, staff are continuing to adjust programming to ensure accessibility for students with disabilities and to respect students' cultural and family beliefs. Additional staff training has taken place, and new staff members have been hired.

7. **Announcement**
 - a. Site Council elections will take place in May
8. **Adjournment:** 3:02 pm



Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting Minnesota State Academies Board

An Executive Committee Meeting of the Minnesota State Academies Board was held Monday, March 16, 2026, beginning at 3:15 PM in the Tate Hall Conference Room, 615 Olof Hanson Drive, Faribault, MN 55021.

Present: Chair Annette Freiheit, Katie Wangberg, Sara Pratt, Superintendent Terry Wilding

Call to Order

Called to order at 3:15

Meeting Minutes Review

No changes.

Enrollment Study Request

Chair Freiheit shared that MSAD Site Council Representative Sonny Wasilowski had requested consideration of an enrollment study, referencing a recent study conducted by Northfield Public Schools. Superintendent Wilding will research potential costs.

The group discussed whether a formal study would provide useful or new information, noting MSA's unique role as a state agency, known barriers to enrollment (including IDEA, LRE, and distance), and limitations in available statewide data on Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, and Blind/Visually Impaired students. Members also discussed perceptions about MSA's recruitment efforts, the value of comparing statistics against other state schools, and the importance of focusing on student retention. Superintendent Wilding noted improved referral numbers in recent years, citing the new Outreach department's efforts.

The group agreed enrollment efforts would be best addressed through the strategic planning process.

Decision: referred to the Strategic Plan Steering Team for consideration as part of enrollment-related action steps.

Upcoming Cognia Accreditation Visit

Superintendent Wilding reported that Cognia will conduct onsite and virtual visits as part of the accreditation process, and they have requested time with Board members. Superintendent Wilding recommended scheduling a 30-45 minute meeting with the Executive Committee on Tuesday, April 28. Members indicated availability on that day, preferably before 2:00 p.m. and outside of 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

It was noted this will not be a formal Board meeting and no Board business will be conducted, so the meeting will not be publicly posted.

Strategic Plan

Superintendent Wilding reported that she will be meeting with Dr. Webb to finalize logistics for the April 1 Steering Team meeting. Twenty-one stakeholders have confirmed participation, with a few additional representatives still being sought from specific stakeholder groups.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 3:45 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 30, 2026, beginning at 3:15pm via Zoom.

Present: Terry Wilding – Superintendent, Katie Wangberg – Board Member, Heather Smisek – HR Director, Justin Cyboron – Director of Curriculum and Educational Programs, Hernan Moncada – Board Member

Absent: Brittany Thomforde – Director of Student Support Services

1. Call to Order: 3:15pm

2. Meeting Minutes Review: None

3. Policies to Review from MSBA: None

4. Policies to Review for a Second Reading:

A. 903 – Visitors to MSA Buildings and Sites

- Ready to proceed for 2nd reading.

5. Policies to Review Before Revision: None

6. Policies to Review Prior to a First Reading: None

7. Policies to Review for Reauthorization: None

8. Procedures to Review:

A. Procedure 2301: Interview/Recommendations – MSA Board Candidates

- Terry – site council prefers to meet someone new – perhaps a board meet and greet. It depends on the person and their background.
 - Katie – should we clarify that?
 - Terry - yes. I will make edits and bring them to the board another time. Should be able to get it done before the April board meeting.
 - This will be added to the Board agenda for review/approval.

9. Continue Review of Minnesota Statutes Related to MSA

125 A.62 – Duties of the Board of the Minnesota State Academies (continued from last meeting)

- Terry – should we continue with discussion of the board composition? What are your thoughts and perspectives?

- Katie – I feel like the numbers we have are perfect. Discussing flexibility with the superintendent role is worth exploring. Not sure if keeping business people on the board is necessary.

Subd 2 – Terms; compensation; and other

- Terry – how do we feel about terms? Right now, members cannot serve more than two 4-year terms. We once had a person serve their two terms and then tried for another term in a different role which led to discussion of this section. Do we want to consider this? Or should we limit people to two terms for the rest of their life? Can they return later? What terminology do we use? Any thoughts?
 - Katie – I feel that other boards are two terms and that is it. How do public schools work? It depends on voters.
 - Terry – Katie, how do you feel? You are in your second term.
 - Katie – I do not know... having experience on the board is an advantage since the community is so small. I do not know if we will always be able to find someone who is willing.
 - Hernan – why would we say no to someone coming back down that road? After X number of years, you can be put back on the board. Filling positions can be difficult.
 - Justin – my feelings are the same. I think if there are issues, there are procedures to address them. If someone is not the right fit, they can be removed from their position or not appointed again. If they really are a good fit, why would we want to prevent them from applying? Could we say something like you can serve two consecutive terms then a break for two years or whatever and you are welcome to apply again?
 - Heather – I like that idea, and because it is appointed and you have that option to say no, why not give good ones who want to serve again that opportunity?
 - Katie – I also wonder all of those on the board, do we have a say at all as to who gets appointed?
 - Terry – you can send a letter of recommendation, but the governor has the final say.
 - Katie – do we have to say it cannot be the same position again?
 - Terry – what does everyone think?
 - Justin – I do not have a strong opinion. One person could represent two or three separate roles, I think.
 - Hernan – I agree.
 - Terry – we could say they can apply for any of the positions and the governor will decide.
 - Katie – how long do we want to wait in between? Two years? One term?
 - Terry – most organizations/schools do one term so that would mean four years. What do you feel?

- Justin – if there is a really good person and we really want them back then maybe two years is long enough to wait to get them back in a different position.
- Terry – let us discuss this again during future meetings.

Subd 3 – Meetings

- Terry – this states that meetings must be held in Faribault. When we did not have Zoom, we wanted more people around the state to attend. With Zoom I do not know that we need to state Faribault. We also do not need to have meetings in other locations as everyone can join virtually, even if they live far away.

Subd 4 – Most beneficial, least restrictive

- Terry – as far as the terminology, we want to use modern language. Any thoughts? Looking for more consistent language.

Subd 5 – Planning evaluation, and reporting

- Terry – this is pretty boiler plate – any changes you would like to see?

Subd 6 – Site councils

- Terry -Site council – do we want to keep it, change it, eliminate, or replace? It was 2000 when we established our board. We have made some progress with the new bylaws, but it gets harder and harder to get people to participate. In the past, site councils were more proactive/productive. For example, MSAB’s Homecoming came from site council, as did the blind school 150-year celebration. The deaf campus is more involved. At both schools, it still feels like we do not have a clear vision of what we are trying to achieve with the site councils. Some participants have asked why we even have site council. A few were really passionate about wanting a site council. We could replace it with something different but continue to allow for stakeholder involvement?
 - Katie – with our current site council it seems like it is one person running the show. The purpose is to communicate between community and board.
 - Terry – how would we get community input without them? The site council was supposed to be that connection but that does not always happen.
 - Katie – are there any other organizations? Like the alumni group?
 - Terry – there was a parent advisory group in the past. We used to have a PTSA at the deaf school but have never had one at the blind school. Currently, we do not have any other groups.
 - Justin – this is my first experience working with a school with a board and site council. A different approach is not a bad idea, but I am not sure what that looks like because we do not have that strong parental organization here. We only got thirteen responses out of 140 families. Are we spinning our wheels?

- Katie – I notice that this is a pattern all over. Back when I was in school, parents were heavily involved but that has changed. How would we reach out to families? Where would we get information?
- Terry – At private schools, parents pay so it makes sense that they are more involved. Here, it is more challenging as many parents are not local so the connection to the school feels different. How can we involve and engage parents, staff, and students? Town hall meetings? We could expand on our website for suggestions. What is the purpose of site council? What do we want from them?
- Katie – Do they get a stipend?
- Terry – There is no reimbursement for site council participation.
- Katie – Would that be worthwhile?
- Justin – Some staff have strong opinions about site council; the issue is getting people. Outside community participation is difficult.
- Terry – We have streamlined positions now which has helped. It is still challenging to fill parent/external community positions.
- Katie - Justin, what do people say about site council? What do they feel?
- Justing – Some staff mention canceling meetings, struggling with quorum, that there is a lot of talk and talk and nothing is resolved so why do we go to these meetings.
- Katie – I think we need a replacement – a way for people to be involved. No involvement seems extreme.
- Justin – What about student council/ student rep. I can ask during staff meetings.
- Katie – Would the student rep go to meetings?
- Terry – It would be nice to have a student be on the board as an ex-officio representative but seems challenging. They could not vote. That could be a lot to add for a student. We could add a student rep and a parent rep?
- Justin – If site council is no longer operating, do we need an ex-officio member?
- Katie – Can an ex officio be a parent?
- Terry – I will ask around at other schools to see what they do for involvement. We will revisit this again.

Subd 7 – Trustee of academies’ property and Subd 8 – Grants and gifts

- Terry – I do not see any changes and there is not much there. Does anyone else have any concerns about these? No.
- Terry – we will go over the handbook and policies next month. We may need a special meeting or more than one meeting/month to cover this.

10. Adjourn: 3:59