



World's Best Workforce Report

for the 2019-2020 school year

District #0160

Minnesota State Academies:

Minnesota State Academy for the Blind and

Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf

December 2019

In 2013, Minnesota state legislature passed the World's Best Workforce (WBWF) legislation (Minnesota Statute, section 120B.11). It requires school districts to identify clearly defined goals and benchmarks for all student groups, along with a process for evaluating students' progress. Led by the directors of each campus and our school accountability committee, recommendations

will be made to the school board to assist the decision making progress. The WBWF has five components:

- All students ready for Kindergarten.
- All students in third grade achieving grade-level literacy.
- Close the achievement gaps among all groups.
- All students career and college ready by graduation.
- All students graduate.

Since the school started classes in 1863, Minnesota State Academies (MSA) has over 150 years of educating low incidence disabilities including deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, blind, and visually impaired students on two campuses - the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (MSAD) and the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind (MSAB). MSA serves students from birth through age 21. Our students are either day students living within a 25 mile radius of the school or residential students staying on our campuses in Faribault, Minnesota. In serving students coming from many different towns/locations around the state, year after year, MSA has become one of the leaders in deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, blind, and visually impaired education in the state of Minnesota. Each student at the academies is on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which outlines each student's present levels of performance and goals/objectives to assist the student in reaching grade-level academic, language, communication, and social-emotional skills.. Secondary disabilities and accommodations are addressed within the plan with input from all members of the IEP team but it is the goal of the school that each student will be college and career ready upon graduation from our programs.

In order to monitor our progress and ensure compliance with mandated expectations, MSA has established a School Accountability Committee to oversee this report as well as other school curriculum and instructional needs. Current members of this School Accountability Committee are:

Committee Member	Role in District
Anne Grace Donatucci	MSAD Director
John Davis	MSAB Director
Brittany Thomforde	MSA Director Of Support Services
Heather Breitbach	Support Services Representative and MSAD Site Council Representative
Jeffrey Peterson	MSAB Site Council Representative
Ryan Johnson, Charles Lechtenberg	MSA Teacher Representatives
Talea Smith, Deanne Curran	MSA Parent Representative
Benny Dow, Dalina Schwartz	MSAD Student Representative
Heidi Cole	Clerical Support

MSAD Student Performance Data:

MSAD has continues to document student growth over multiple data points, using high stakes assessments and diagnostic tools. By adopting various assessments, we are able to align student growth and progress, while factoring reading proficiency, background, age and grade. This year MSAD used a variety of assessments to measure student growth - STAR reading diagnostic, Test of Early Reading Ability for Deaf/Hard of Hearing students (TERA-DHH), Northwest Evaluation Assessment Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP), Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA), Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) and the American College Testing (ACT). Below is a description of each test and the grades assessed.

NWEA MAP - District assessment, measured on percentile ranking - scores within the 33-68th percentile are considered average as compared to hearing peers. Students assessed - 3rd-12th grade.

STAR - District assessment, measured on instructional level reading and lexile range. Example: a 1.4 score is equivalent to a first grade reading level in the fourth month of instruction. Students assessed - 3rd - 12th grade.

TERA-DHH - Test of Early Reading Ability designed for use with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students ages 3 years to 13 years, 11 months. The TERA-DHH measures a student's ability to attribute meaning to printed symbols, their knowledge of the alphabet and its functions, and their knowledge of the conventions of print. This test is normed on Deaf and Hard of Hearing students; it does not compare Deaf and Hard of Hearing students with their hearing counterparts. The TERA-DHH is scored as Poor, Below Average, Average, Above Average and Superior.

MCA/MTAS - State achievement assessment, given annually in the spring. The tests are used to measure how well MSAD has aligned curriculum to and instructed students in the Minnesota Academic Standards in reading, mathematics and science. The reading and mathematics assessments are also used in federal and state accountability measurements. The MCA/MTAS uses a score of Exceeds, Meets, Partially Meets and Does Not Meet for Minnesota standards. Students assessed, MCA Reading - 3rd-8th & 10th. Students assessed, MCA Math - 3rd - 8th & 11th. Students assessed, MCA Science - 5th, 8th & 10th.

ACT - College readiness exam for 11th/12th graders.

ASL Assessment Instrument (ASLAI) – Four year olds through High School, this test measures ASL receptive skills through a series of multiple choice questions. Students are asked to view a

signed sample then address areas of language such as – vocabulary, sentence syntax, synonyms, antonyms, analogies and declarative sentences.

MSAB Student Performance Data:

The Minnesota State Academy for the Blind uses the reading and math portions of the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) and the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) as our source for student performance data. The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) are state tests in reading, mathematics, and science that are used to meet federal and state legislative requirements. The tests are administered every year to measure student performance relative to the Minnesota Academic Standards that specify what students in a particular grade should know and be able to do. The Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) is an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. It is a part of the Minnesota assessment program. The MTAS measures reading, mathematics, and science skills that are linked to the general education curriculum. These skills represent high expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities, but tasks to measure these skills are considerably less difficult than the items on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA). The reading and mathematics MCA and MTAS tests are administered in grades 3–8 and high school. The Reading MCA is taken in 10th grade and the Mathematics MCA is taken in 11th grade.

The MCA is used to find out how well schools have aligned curriculum and instructional activities to the Minnesota Academic Standards in reading, mathematics, and science. The reading and mathematics assessments are also used in federal and state accountability measurements. MSAB has aligned our curriculum to the Minnesota Academic Standards and the results of the tests provide a snapshot of how each student is performing. They are used to improve classroom teaching and learning for each student. A portion of the students at MSAB are unable to achieve grade-level proficiency due to their disability, and the MTAS helps guide MSAB in providing access to reading, mathematics, and science instruction that is linked to the Minnesota Academic Standards at the student's grade level to the extent appropriate. The MTAS is designed to measure student progress on academic skills.

All of our students are on IEPs and are eligible for accommodations when taking these tests. However, as with other high stake summative assessments, these tests have not been normed for students with visual impairments. Furthermore, even though there are a wide variety of accommodations available for our students to access these tests, there are still concerns about the quality of accommodations provided. The provided raised line graphs/graphics provided for the math test have been very challenging for our totally blind students to decipher. The students' struggles with the raised line graphics raises concerns as to whether the tests are providing an

accurate assessment of what the students know. Another area of concern is the amount of time that it takes our students to complete the tests compared to their regular education peers. These tests typically take a regular education student 2-3 hours on a single day to complete as compared to multiple hours over several days for students who are visually impaired.

These assessments are administered following the strict guidelines provided by the state and the providing testing company. As stated above, the students are allowed only the accommodations that are provided by the state through the testing company and as written in the students' IEPs.

Since the numbers of students taking these assessments is very low (sometimes as low as one student per grade), we use the results to give us a general idea of how the students are performing as a school and an assessment how the students are doing individually. There are not large enough data sets (cohorts of students) to provide any statistically significant analysis. Overall, our students perform better on the reading portions of both the MCA and MTAS tests. Both the reading and math results have shown increase in the amount of students performing at partially meets or meets the state required performance level. The students perform at a lower level on the Math assessment. There has been an increase in the number of students performing at the "meets state required performance" level in the past year on the MCA and in the past 3 years on the MTAS. The results on the math portion of the MCA and MTAS are typical of students with visual impairments. This is due to the challenges that students with visual impairments have with learning spatial concepts of math and the issues with the quality of raised line graphics on the assessments

Section I: Kindergarten Readiness

Children are ready for Kindergarten when:

1. Children are 5 years of age by September 1 (Minnesota State Statute 120A.20)
2. Children are immunized (Minnesota State Statute 121A.15)
3. Children have completed early childhood screening (Minnesota State Statute 121A.17)

MSAD: MSAD has an Early Childhood Education (ECE) program that starts when students are 18 months of age. Through progress monitoring tools, summative and formative assessments, all children that enter the program are assessed in different developmental domains such as Cognitive, Language, Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Social-Emotional, and Self-Help using the Hawaiian Early Language Profile (HELP). At the time they are ready to exit the Early Childhood Program and enter Kindergarten, English language, English literacy and mathematical thinking is assessed using the Brigance Inventory Assessment Tools..

The MSAD ECE program places a high emphasis on language development and kindergarten readiness. It is our belief that language acquisition takes place through a rich language environment and for students to have access and the ability to experience the world around them. Using the Visual Communication Sign Language (VCSL) Assessment, students are assessed for language benchmarks in their native language of American Sign Language.

The curriculum is aligned with the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress: Minnesota's Early Learning Standards (ECIP). All developmental milestones are fostered as well as exposure and instruction on pre-academic skills. The goal is that all of our ECE students will be kindergarten ready when they exit the program.

MSAB: MSAB does not have an Early Childhood Education (ECE) program on site but MSAB does provide early childhood services, ages birth to 5, within the home and early childhood programs within the students home district. This mode of service provision follows best practices established for early childhood students with visual impairments which stress building critical milestone skills which may be impacted by the child's visual impairment. These include:

- Achieving head control
- Achieving "reach"
- Encouraging rolling over
- Encouraging independent sitting
- Encouraging standing
- Encouraging walking
- Building language
- Encouraging social interaction
- Building cognitive ability.

The development of these skills is best done in a familiar environment to the child such as the home since visually impaired children are at even greater risk for developmental delays. It is crucial that VI specialists (both VI teachers and O&M specialists), parents and early childhood personnel work cooperatively with young visually impaired children, in order to build the skills and provide the experiences that will make best use of the potential in these children. By providing these services within the home or in programs close to home (local early childhood programs), the whole team including parents can work together.

Goal for 2019-2020: The Minnesota State Academies will assess all new early childhood students at their enrollment into the Academies as a data point to ensure students are making age appropriate growth.

<u>Goal: 2019-2020</u>	<u>Result</u>	<u>Goal Status</u>
The Minnesota State Academies will assess all new early childhood students at their enrollment into the Academies as a data point to ensure students are making age appropriate growth.	The Minnesota State Academies had one new student enroll at the Academies with a comprehensive evaluation as a baseline to measure age appropriate growth. The Academies would like to continue this goal for the 2020-2021 school year due to the low number of ECE enrollments.	Goal Met Goal Not Met Goal in Progress

Proposed Goal for 2020-2021: The Minnesota State Academies will continue to assess all new early childhood students at their enrollment into the Academies as a data point to ensure students are making age-appropriate growth.

Section II: All Third-Graders Can Read at Grade Level Literacy

Minnesota Statute 120B.12 requires that, all school districts will:

1. Assess students' level of reading proficiency and identify students not yet reading at grade level.
2. Notify and involve parents/guardians of students who are not yet reading at grade level.
3. Intervene and accelerate learning growth for students who are not yet reading at grade level.
4. Ensure that elementary teachers have appropriate training and support to provide comprehensive, scientifically-based and culturally sensitive instruction.
5. Adopt and post a 'Local Literacy Plan' to ensure that all students are reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade by June 1 of each year.

Assessing Student's Literacy Skills and Reading Proficiency-

MSAD: Progress monitoring starts with eligibility and criteria to receive Special Education Services. Once a student is admitted into our Early Childhood Education program, progress monitoring is set in place and reporting is shared, following goals and objectives included in their IEPs. As part of the IDEA re-evaluation requirement, progress monitoring continues through a student's entire tenure in the educational system. Students are assessed using curriculum based formative assessments and measured against early learning standards and benchmarks. Assessments administered are the Hawaiian Early Learning Profile and the Brigance Inventory Assessment Tools.

All kindergarten students are administered a kindergarten readiness assessment and the Test of Early Reading Ability – Deaf or Hard of Hearing (TERA DHH).

Students in 1st grade are given the Test of Early Reading Ability – Deaf or Hard of Hearing (TERA DHH) as well as the STAR reading assessment through Renaissance Learning. Outcomes from both assessments guide reading strategies and intervention. Throughout the year, students participate in a literacy initiative through Accelerated Reader assessments. Daily formative assessments are given, to measure for comprehension, retention and instructional pace.

Students in 2nd grade are given the Test of Early Reading Ability – Deaf or Hard of Hearing (TERA DHH) as well as the STAR reading assessment through Renaissance Learning. Outcomes from both assessments guide reading strategies and intervention. Throughout the year, students participate in a literacy initiative through Accelerated Reader assessments. Daily formative assessments are given, to measure for comprehension, retention and instructional pace. During the spring, students are also given the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

survey test to expose them to high stakes assessments and establish a baseline in which we can monitor outcomes.

Students in 3rd grade that are making adequate progress continue to be assessed using the STAR reading assessment, NWEA MAP, and will sit for the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment for the first time in the spring. By giving students assessments that are adaptive (allowing them to be tested at their level), we can produce growth related outcomes (each student has an individualized normed growth measure) as well as preparing our students to be college and career ready (MAP scores have been aligned to ACT benchmarks). The Minnesota State Academies are able to gain a clear picture of the level that each student is performing at. Students showing need of intervention, will be assessed using the Test of Early Reading Ability – Deaf or Hard of Hearing (TERA DHH) and provided with individualized instruction to help them improve their academic and language skills.

Grade	Assessment	Purpose	Timeline
ECE - K	Visual Communication Sign Language (VCSL) Assessment Hawaii Early Learning Profile	Progress monitoring, Cognitive, Language, Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Social-Emotional, Self Help	Fall and Spring
K	Visual Communication Sign Language (VCSL) Assessment	Progress monitoring, Cognitive, Language, Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Social-Emotional, Self Help	Fall and Spring
K-3	Test of Early Reading Ability - Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Progress monitoring	Fall and Spring
1-3	STAR Reading Assessment	Independent reading levels, progress monitoring	Fall, Winter, Spring
2-3	Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA)	Progress monitoring	Fall and Spring

All results are communicated with families and based on the outcomes of scores. Tier 1 and 2 interventions are put into place and quarterly progress reports are sent home along with report cards. Teachers are trained on how to provide differentiated instruction, chunk information into small sizes, and provide appropriate visual support and pacing for students. MSA also allows for flex groupings of students to be educated with peers that are at the same reading level as them but might not be at the same grade level. Flex groupings are implemented in 4th-6th grades. At MSA, our class sizes are small, providing students with a low teacher-student ratio, and allowing for greater individual support and instruction.

MSAD follows an ASL/English Bilingual teaching philosophy, in which, instruction is done through American Sign Language with English taught through print. The guiding principle is that through intentional social and academic interactions both in and outside of the classroom, students will become proficient in both ASL and English. Teachers implement bilingual instructional strategies within their lessons and students are evaluated through the use of summative and formative assessments. In the spring of 2018, MSAD will contract with the Learning Center for the Deaf to evaluate and assess our students receptive ASL skills in eleven different sub tests related to vocabulary, syntax, reasoning and comprehension.

MSAB: At MSAB, teachers assess students in order to collect information about how much knowledge and skill the students have learned. Teachers also use assessments to gauge the students' level of learning. The two basic types of assessments we use are formative and summative.

Formative: Journaling, conferring, observation, self-assessment, portfolios, etc.

Summative: Unit assessments, standardized assessments, portfolios, etc. Specific assessments include; Reading A to Z (Benchmark Reading), STAR, Running Reading Records, and DIBELS Progress Monitoring.

All students at MSAB are assessed to determine their primary learning media using the Learning Media Assessment (LMA). This assessment determines which mode of media is the student's primary media (print, large print, braille, or auditory). This determination is based on what is the most accessible media for the student. For those students who are identified as being braille readers, they receive direct braille instruction which begins with pre-braille skills and progresses to instruction in the Unified English Braille code (UEB) and Nemeth Braille (mathematical and scientific notation). Furthermore, students receive instruction on the use of a variety of assistive technology (AT). Assistive technology further provides greater access to materials that the student's sighted peers have access to on a daily basis and can include but is not limited to simple switches, computers with voice output/enlargement software, refreshable braille devices, smartphones, tablets with voice output, and electronic book readers.

Goal for 2019-2020: 75% of MSA students in the 3rd grade will score a 188 RIT on their Spring NWEA-MAP reading assessment.

<u>Goal: 2019-2020</u>	<u>Result</u>	<u>Goal Status</u>
75% of MSA students will score a 188 RIT score or above on their Spring NWEA-MAP Reading assessment.	Of the seven third grades, MSA had that took the NWEA – MAP, 58% of them scored a 188 or above as their RIT Score. MSA would like to make adjustments to instruction, curriculum and test preparation and continue working on this goal areas.	Goal Met Goal Not Met Goal in Progress

Proposed Goal for 2020-2021: 75% of MSA students in the 3rd grade will score a 188 RIT on their Spring NWEA-MAP reading assessment.

Section III: Closing the Achievement Gap:

MSAD: MSAD believes that by providing a rich language and fully accessible environment, a safe space for cultural and identity development, and an warm, supporting environment for each student to learn, we can provide tools for our students to close the achievement gap. Due to the linguistic challenges that many of our families have, especially with deaf children who utilize ASL as their language for communication and learning, we feel the largest hindrance on achievement is that students and families need to have a shared language so that information sharing and cultural/identity development is fully supported by the family. In many cases, parents are still developing their skills in ASL in order to communicate effectively with their child.

In our residential program and after school programs, we provide opportunities for students to be immersed in an environment where they have full access to language 24/7 while on campus. MSAD provides home visits to families learning ASL and provides free ASL classes for parents and siblings/family members.

In our academic programs, we provide ASL instruction both in the classroom and via an ASL specialist who provides support for teachers, individual students, and small group instruction. By providing students with strong language foundations, we support development of both ASL and English throughout the school day in all content areas. By providing instruction in ASL, we support our students' acquisition of grade-level academic skills in content areas other than language.

MSAB: Visual impairments change the way children obtain information about the world around them and limit opportunities to learn through observation of visual elements in the school curriculum and elsewhere. This means that, in addition to regular classroom studies, children who are blind or visually impaired need to learn specialized skills (frequently referred to as the Expanded Core Curriculum) from teachers and others who are properly trained to teach such skills, such as certified teachers of visually impaired children and orientation and mobility specialists. The specialized skills children who are visually impaired must learn include:

- Technology and computer proficiency—using computer equipment, such as a screen reader, to read information on monitors or in print
- Literacy—reading and writing with braille, large print, optical devices, or training in effective use of available vision
- Age-appropriate career education—exploring career preferences, participating in job experiences using non-visual methods
- Safe and independent mobility—using specific orientation and mobility techniques, long canes, or other mobility tools
- Social interaction—understanding body language and other visual concepts

- Independent living skills—learning specialized techniques for personal grooming, food preparation, money management, and other tasks

MSAB believes that by providing student access to educational and daily materials commensurate to their sighted peers is vital to closing the achievement gap. The expanded core curriculum is a vital part of MSAB’s programming and is centered on the needs of students, who are blind and or visually impaired, including assistive technology, orientation and mobility, family and consumer science, art, disability adapted physical education, career education, compensatory or functional academic skills including communication modes, Independent living skills, recreation and leisure skills, social interaction skills, self-determination, and visual efficiency skills/sensory efficiency. Also, small class sizes at MSAB allow for flexible grouping, assessment, and individualized lessons. Classes provide hands on experiences, adaptations, and modifications for the students. Students are provided an array of opportunities to apply, practice, and deepen their understanding of new knowledge through their I.E.P., the work program, extracurricular opportunities, guest speakers in Careers classes, and the Site Council. Teachers continually assess student data to modify curriculum. Teachers use mainstream curriculum and specialized curriculum with students that have been modified to the students’ needs and abilities.

Goal for 2019-2020: MSA will look at standardized tests, IEP goal/objective completion and access to curriculum to determine performance indicators.

<u>Goal for 2019-2020:</u>	<u>Result</u>	<u>Goal Status</u>
MSA will look at all standardized tests, IEP goal/objective completion and access to curriculum to determine performance indicators.	MSA continues to look at accessibility to tests and curriculum and make adjustments/changes as needed.	Goal Met Goal Not Met Goal in Progress

Proposed Goal for 2020-2021: MSA will look at all students’ standardized tests, IEP goal/objective completion and increase IEP testing accommodations on an individual basis to all access to state and district tests.

Section IV: Career and College Readiness:

Understanding that college and career readiness starts well before high school, MSA knows that along with strong literacy skills, exposing students to the world around them and possible careers is vital to their success. Academic courses such as career education, pre-vocational courses, work

experience and job placement programs are available to all high school students. The Ramp-It Up To Readiness curriculum is used with students 6th-12th grade, covering readiness in each of the following categories - academic, admissions, personal and social, financial and career.

Students grades 9th-12th have all areas of their IEP Transition – Post Secondary, Education & Training, Employment, Home Living, Recreation & Leisure, Community Participation and Self advocacy skills embedded into the curriculum. With a required careers class for all seniors, students map their interests and possible careers post graduation. MSA also offers job coaching and work study programs for students to work off campus. Students learn the importance of budgeting, public transportation, resume building and interview skills. Each year, colleges from around the country come to campus and share the various programs their schools offer. In the fall of each year, National Honor Society hosts a college and career fair.

In preparation for the ACT and other standardized tests, our students have exposure to different standardized testing throughout their high school years and receive periodical reviews and instruction related to test-taking strategies and technical requirements for those tests. Students in 10th-12th grades can also elect to take the Accuplacer assessment for PSEO and AP classes. MSA has a long-time agreement with Faribault Public Schools to allow students from both academies to take different content-area coursework and electives in their programs, providing our students with expanded choices and experiences that assists them in becoming more ready for their college/career choice.

Goal for 2019-2020: 75% of MSA transition aged students will meet their IEP goals/objectives in the area of transition planning.

<u>Goal for 2019-2020</u>	<u>Result</u>	<u>Goal Status</u>
75% of MSA transition aged students will meet their IEP goals/objectives in the area of transition planning.	All MSA students of transition age, have specific transition related coursework and transition planning in their IEP.	Goal Met Goal Not Met Goal in Progress

Proposed Goal for 2019: 80% of MSA transition-aged students will meet their IEP goals/objectives in the area of transition planning.

Section V: Student Graduation Rates:

MSAD: In 2016-2017, MSAD had 16 graduates, representing a 100% graduation rate.

MSAB: In 2016-2017, MSAB had 4 graduates, representing a 100% graduation rate.

All of our students at MSA are monitored in their progress towards meeting graduation requirements through annual IEP meetings and any accommodations/modifications that are necessary are listed in their plans. Students also have the option of remaining in school up to 21 years of age. Because of this, we have different options available to our students (4-5-6 year high school programs) and over the past 5 years, our graduation rate has exceeded 95%.

Goal for 2019-2020: The Minnesota State Academies will continue to have a 100% graduation rate, including students who remain in school for more than 4 years.

<u>Goal for 2019-2020</u>	<u>Result</u>	<u>Goal Status</u>
The Minnesota State Academies will disaggregate data on the percent of students who meet Minnesota State High School graduation requirements and those that graduate on an IEP.	MSA was able to look at the graduating classes of both schools and disaggregate the data on graduation requirements.	Goal Met Goal Not Met Goal in Progress

Proposed Goal for 2020-2021: The Minnesota State Academies will continue to have a 100% graduation rate, including establishing progress monitoring for students who attend our Academic Plus (18-21) programing.