



Strategic Mid-Plan Review

February 2021

In 2018, our staff, students, parents, alumni and stakeholders, along with the support of the MSA governing board, came together to develop the MSA 2018-2023 Strategic Plan. This was done through hosting many meetings, community town halls, and surveys to gather as much feedback as possible from many people and groups. This document is the result of this work, and it lists our 5-year goals (2018-2023).

In January and February of 2021, representatives from various stakeholder groups met again to do a mid-plan review of the work we've done so far, to make sure we have made some progress, and to figure out what actions we should take going forward until 2023. This report is a summary of what we've accomplished since 2018, and what our next steps should be.

Below is a quick overview of our strategic goal areas. If you would like more details and/or to see the full 2018-2023 Strategic Plan document, please go to our website (www.msa.state.mn.us).

Mission

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

Vision

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

Strategic Areas of Focus

1 School Climate

2 Student Life

3 Instruction & Assessment

4 Statewide Visibility

5 Transition



1. School Climate

5-Year Goal Summary:

MSA will make sure that...

- All communications are timely, consistent and effective
- An effective student support system is in place
- Our staff get training and support related to their jobs

What We've Done:

- Increased the amount of communications (weekly update emails sent out to more than 500 people, weekly wellness tips sent out to students, staff, families and community, hosted open meetings for MSA community on Zoom)
- Shared regular superintendent updates on YouTube
- Hosted many events, including Family Immersion Weekend, to share information and resources
- Increased time and opportunities for staff training, including online training
- Made sure all of our communications are accessible to everyone
- Started offering virtual (Zoom) Parent-Teacher conferences
- Developing a mobile app for both campuses
- Security corridor approved by legislators
- Suicide prevention procedures created and support given to staff to detect possible suicidal behavior or unsafe environments during Distance Learning
- Expanded our Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) program (2nd year)
- Student groups now have direct communication with MSAD and MSAB directors

Suggested Action Items:

- **More opportunities for both MSAD and MSAB to socialize with each other and host events together**
- **More opportunities for middle and high school students to socialize**
- **Include anti-bias, anti-racism, and diversity awareness in our plan and make sure it is clear, understandable and accessible for all**
- **More surveys sent out and compare results with past surveys to make sure we are on the right track**
- **Involve students more in decision-making for events and activities**
- **More videos and updates from superintendent, with more spotlights on our programs, services, and staff**
- **Continue with open forums/meetings for staff after COVID-19**
- **Make better use of our mass communications system**
- **Start looking at possibly adding text messages as another way of communicating alerts and announcements**
- **Continue and increase posts on social media**



2. Student Life

5-Year Goal Summary:

Student Life will...

- Provide a wide range of quality programs and activities
- Train and support our staff in running these activities and get more students involved
- Make full use of services and resources for both campuses

What We've Done:

- Before COVID-19, Student Life increased socialization opportunities with students from other schools (Region 10, Gallaudet University Regional Academic Bowl, Deaf/Hard of Hearing Teen Night during Homecoming)
- Before COVID-19, Student Life hosted a variety of student groups and after-school activities (such as the Book Reading Club (which continued during Distance Learning), Dungeons & Dragons, Health Fair, and STEM activities)
- Offered volunteer opportunities for students (such as Feed My Starving Children)
- MSAB Student Life created three (3) resource books for students: cooking, recreation, and self-help
- During the Stay at Home Order, Student Life created a series of videos to share ideas for at-home activities, hobbies, and craft projects
- During Distance Learning, virtual activities were offered weekly (activity ideas, club/groups, and hangouts)

Suggested Action Items:

- **Continue expanding our resource books, and share them with families and BVI teachers statewide**
- **Offer more educational activities (i.e.: cooking or other living skills) that are open to all dorm and after school program students**
- **Host combined events and social opportunities for both campuses**
- **Increase efforts to involve parents**
- **Offer more training on child development and behavior issues for dorm staff and SEPAs**
- **More opportunities for MSA dorm staff to connect with other deaf/blind schools to share resources and tips**
- **Offer more work experience opportunities**



3. Instruction & Assessment

5-Year Goal Summary:

MSA will...

- Put a system in place that encourages collaboration and coordination between both campuses
- Make sure our curriculum, teaching methods and assessment are aligned with our Guiding Beliefs

What We've Done:

- Since the 2019-2020 statewide/district assessments were canceled due to the pandemic, MSA is using student IEP goals and progress reports to collect data for our reports
- We included all state and district assessment and accommodations/modifications to student IEPs
- MSA increased a focus on test procedures, training teachers, IEP testing accommodations, test schedules, environment, and validity
- The pandemic gave us the opportunity to expand our resources used in teaching our students
- Upgraded fiber optic lines, new network servers ordered and installed, working on improved Wi-Fi/Internet connectivity
- Trial program of Braille instruction on MSAD campus in collaboration with MSAB and a DeafBlind consultant
- Continued giving feedback to the Minnesota Department of Education on the accessibility of their testing systems
- Established Assistive Technology team to share resources for staff and students, and created Tech Coach ECA positions to share resources and tech training for staff
- Started planning for the addition of 7th period, offering elective classes
- Expansion of our curriculum room and instructional materials

Suggested Action Items:

- Continue inventory of our curriculum, instructional materials, assistive equipment, and small equipment/accessories
- Explore in-house curriculum/spiral system for ASL instruction
- Add online classes available to non-MSA students
- Add transition, vocational, elective, and CTE courses
- Create Expanded Core Curriculum resource book for dorms
- Create checklist/buddy system/resource books for all new employees to make sure they have everything they need for their job
- Add 1- or 2-day training for newly hired SEPAs or substitutes
- Explore funding options for technology needs, or build it into our operations budget
- Make sure in-depth training is provided whenever we buy new technology
- Consider starting a statewide distance learning program
- Make sure when our staff need to work from home, they will have the proper equipment and training
- Improve communication between departments for individual student needs
- Find ways to align academic and non-academic goals to increase student abilities
- More opportunities for staff to observe/visit other schools/special education programs
- Expand our retreats to include high school students
- Arrange for juniors and seniors to visit Minnesota colleges and programs



4. Statewide Visibility

5-Year Goal Summary:

MSA will...

- Develop resources for school districts and families to support students around the state
- All Minnesota school districts will recognize MSA as an educational option and include it in the IEP/placement discussions for students

What We've Done:

- Increase of over 800 new followers across our social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube)
- Worked with school districts on COVID-19 distance learning
- New website completed, over 150,000 views
- New MSA and MSAB mascot logos and branding materials
- I-35 freeway signage completed
- Many family-oriented events and activities were hosted before COVID-19
- Weekly Wellness Wednesday tips, COVID-19 resource web page, and distance learning resources shared
- Provided support and shared resources and information for nearly 300 requests through our website, email and social media
- Collaboration with the University of Minnesota Deaf/Hard of Hearing Teacher Preparation Program

Suggested Action Items:

- Establish our own list-serv and mailing lists
- Figure out capacity and resource needs for hosting online webinars/presentations
- When hosting guest presenters on campus, invite participation from outside MSA
- Explore funding opportunities to host guest speakers/events (professional development and family workshops/events)
- Change our plan of having a mobile assessment team to providing training and support to school districts statewide
- Our website to become a resource center, sharing resources, statewide youth events calendar, and playlists on our YouTube channels
- Revise our brochures with the goal to redirect readers to our website
- Expand our social media presence (SnapChat, Twitter, TikTok, Pinterest); involve student body government and student council
- Add "feedback" box to our website
- Live streaming for all of our events
- After COVID-19, host community town hall meetings across the state
- Work with library systems across MN to host town hall/ASL story time events for families
- Resume sharing of student-created videos



5. Transition

5-Year Goal Summary:

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

What We've Done:

- Expanded our Academy Plus and Pathways to Life Summer Transition on MSAD campus
- Continued adjusting and updating of Academy Plus Program on MSAB campus
- Discussions with Minnesota Department of Education about expanding BVI and Deaf/hard of Hearing services beyond library resources
- Addition of new Assistant Dorm Program Coordinators on both campuses
- Created many more educational activities within the dorms
- Transition plans individualized and included into classes for students aged 14-21

Suggested Action Items:

- Add focus on creating career-awareness classes for K-8
- More elective and “adulting” courses (financial literacy, budgeting, etc.) and courses
- More transition courses for work-bound students
- Bring in guest speakers to discuss careers with students
- Create long-term projects or pop-up business opportunities for students to learn in phases (planning stages, negotiation with clients, project cost estimation, and carrying out)
- After COVID-19, increase off-campus visits to businesses and various places of employment
- Integrate career awareness throughout our general subjects and in our after-school programs
- Offer online short-term programs/webinars/workshops for MSA and non- MSA students
- Offer online short-term programs/webinars/workshops for parents of high-school aged students
- Work with outside agencies and organizations to avoid overlapping or duplication of services
- After COVID-19, expand our workshops and events to statewide
- Offer CPR, AED, and First Aid training for students
- Work placement opportunities for students in their hometowns



Conclusion

Additional Feedback:

- Look at different ways to bring in/recruit more people (parents, staff, alumni, community members) to support our efforts
- More collaboration with organizations and parents to make sure our goals are carried out statewide
- Make sure we have a system in place to support these organizations and groups we collaborate with
- More frequent check-ins and tracking of our goal progress (every quarter instead of annually)
- Stay on top of our priority list
- Create timelines and deadlines for each action step in our plan

Next Steps:

- **Share summary report with stakeholders and community**
- **Host virtual staff, parent and community forums to share the report and gather feedback**
- **Distribute online survey**
- **Compile all feedback in a final report**
- **Final meeting with Mid-Plan Review Committee**
- **Implement final changes in the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan**
- **Share with stakeholders and community**