

Academic Committee
Meeting Minutes
6/4/18
8:00am in room 4A

Present: Tom Johnston, Hannah Kostichka, Emily Graveen, Joell Pundsack, Kassie Larson, Bronwen Williams, Cheri Howe, Donna Nightingale, Troy Nightingale, Jen Heydt-Nelson, Lisa Anderson (chair), Noelle Haland (recorder)

Discussion noted in red below agenda items.

1) Spanish Requirements - Lisa

- a) After looking at all of the data* the Spanish Department decided to keep the current graduation standards.
 - b) The staff voted unanimously to keep the current graduation standards in Spanish as well.
 - c) This will go to the next Board meeting. Are there any other ideas/comments we should add to our findings?
 - d) *I will send the data in another email. The data includes:
 - i) Current Spanish Progression at MSA
 - ii) How many students are affected at each level at MSA
 - iii) What other public schools require for World Language
 - iv) What other charter schools require for World Language
- The point of the new Spanish course progression chart shared today is to get away from the requirement worded as “three years of Spanish” and just plug students into however many years of Spanish they have time to take at MSA (up to 3 years’ minimum).
 - Is it legal and/or fair to have different graduation requirements for different students, eg. transfer students? Difference between “Equitable” versus “equal.”
 - Comparison of Spanish to Calculus requirements - should all students have to complete through the same level Spanish course (as with calculus) versus end with wherever their individual course progression takes them? Is that fair? Kassie’s response: Transfer students all have math coming into MSA, whereas some students have had no Spanish prior to MSA.
 - If junior or senior transfers in without being able to graduate with calculus, they just don’t graduate from MSA, but the same student would be able to graduate having completed a lower level of Spanish.
 - Should we be labeling Spanish classes taken during grades 6-8 as “middle school” and those during grades 9-12 as Spanish I and so on. On transcript, we are required to list any class taken during grades 9-12 but students may request to add courses taken prior to 9th grade if they choose (eg. Spanish I or a math class).

- MSA placement testing is required if they've taken Spanish before MSA or if they come from a Spanish immersion program, and it is available upon request for other students who believe they should be placed in a different Spanish level than is typical for their grade. Students will be placed upon results of placement testing.
- What about students who fail a Spanish class in their course progression sequence, whether as a transfer student or one who's been at MSA all the years? Is it possible that such a student can retake the course the next year and continue on in the sequence, without regard to which course they eventually complete in their time at MSA? Could a student's failure of a course in their individual progression disallow their graduation from MSA? *** A NEW TASK FORCE QUESTION***

2) Credit Recovery - Noelle

- We are still waiting on confirmation of the Director's understanding that students can choose to earn a "state diploma" instead of an MSA diploma in the case of not completing all of MSA's more stringent grad requirements. As we can find no confirmed documentation that this is indeed the case, we are working under the assumption that MSA's current higher grad requirements are solid & that the only students allowed to have varying grad requirements and still earn an MSA diploma do so because of the terms of their IEPs.

3) WBWF - Tom

- No update. MCA data will be available to share in early August.

4) HS Students who enroll late - Joell will have a process by next fall

5) Progress Monitoring - Tom

- Did test run with Fastbridge - easy, quick, preliminary results look like helpful data.
- Need to investigate question of how to lock students out of other web browsing while doing testing. Tom will consult with Fastbridge and elsewhere.

6) PD committee - Lisa

- a) The staff voted to have one member from each of the following departments on this committee: Administration, Special Education, Math, English, Social Studies, MAPE (Music, Arts and PE), Spanish and Science. The departments can decide who their representative will be.
 - b) When should the committee begin their work?
 - c) What will be their charge?
 - d) Other questions?
- Each department will choose a department representative by end of day this Thursday 6/7/18.
 - Charge is to identify, plan, organize overall PD plan for the year.

- Use preliminary MCA data starting now, with finalized data to follow later this summer when available.

7) Graduation Requirements - Lisa

- One student is graduating without meeting the MSA graduation standards. This student failed a PSEO class (Pre-Calculus), but the community college still allowed this student to take the next class in the sequence and they passed (Calculus) at the college. However, the MSA handbook (approved by the Board) reads that they must pass all of the classes: *"The math program at the Math and Science Academy consists of a comprehensive curriculum that allows students to advance at their own pace, provided that they can demonstrate mastery of the content material. The typical sixth grade student will start in Pre-Algebra. After students have reached a level of understanding of basic mathematics, they will begin Algebra I with Geometry. After completing Algebra I with Geometry, Algebra II with Geometry, Algebra III with Geometry and Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus, and Calculus I, students will have learned all of the mathematics necessary to succeed in a traditional college level Calculus I course. In order to graduate from MSA, students must successfully complete all courses in the math sequence through Calculus I."*
- It's probably too late for this year - three days before graduation, but how can we make sure that the handbook policies are followed in the future?
- Do we want the handbook policy to remain the same or to change it?
 - Do we really want all kids to pass all classes, or if they pass the last one in the sequence, is that good enough?
 - If we want them to pass all of the classes, is there wording that needs to change for Math and other classes such as Spanish and Science that are sequential?
- What is the process if there seems to be an exception that should be made to the policy?
 - Can there be exceptions to the policy and how is that determined? How do we make sure that it does not create a bigger problem? How many students at MSA or PSEO have failed classes and we have made them repeat the class, and now this students does not have to repeat the class? This seems to be a dangerous precedent.
 - If we decide to allow exceptions, I wanted to suggest some sort of a procedure just to have a place to start our discussion from? It does not have to be this, but just a place to start...
 - Student/parent goes to the Academic Counselor or Director with an issue that they think merits an exception to the rules.
 - The Director/Academic Advisor would discuss with the Department Chair before making a decision.
 - If the issue is unresolved, and the Director/Academic Advisor want to pursue, they would go to the Academics Committee

(4) If the issue is still unresolved, and the Director/Academic Advisor want to pursue, they would go to the Board

e) Other?

- We don't know the specifics of this case save for what the student self-reported, ie. we don't know what, if anything, Century did to place this student into calculus having not passed the prerequisite.
- This particular student came to admin who gave them permission. The math department wasn't consulted or involved. The math department would have mandated the student take MSA's placement test.
- In older days, MSA requirements were to "pass calculus" and not pass each course in the sequence, as our wording says now.
- Other advanced students have skipped a course in the math progression after placement testing that proved the students' mastery according to the math department.
- If we keep the current language, we need a procedure that specifies in writing how to deal with regular course progression AND exceptions, including going to the academic counselor, the appropriate department, academic committee, etc, in that order. Also add to PSEO procedures specific language that students have to demonstrate mastery according to MSA department standards and get department approval prior.

8) Next Meeting?

- August 27, 8:00am (The following meeting will be September 10, 2018. Committee will establish the year's calendar at the August meeting.)

