

Academics Agenda

June 1 2020

Members: Lisa Anderson, Maggie Burggraaff, Tom Johnston, Joell Pundsack, Emily Graveen, Cheri Howe, Hannah Kostichka, Noah Langseth, Teresa Ward, Kirstin Knutson, Tara Richert, Noelle Haland, Kassie Larson, Wendell Sletten, John Gawarecki, Jennifer Heydt-Nelson, Angie Haverland, ~~Valerie Meyer~~

1. Modified Transcript Update (Lisa) 2 minutes
 - a. Updated procedure is attached- please read before the meeting to save time

The update is finished. The biggest change is the curriculum cutoff is now a 25% of a change. This signifies a below average scoring. This is for middle and high school students and for different classes.

There are different numbers for the absences; these relate to the state levels of 20 days

Unenrolled is 15 days. Counsellors will meet with staff and students as soon as possible depending on the situation so that different alternatives can be offered to the family.

2. WBWF Updates (Tom) 3 minutes

No update

3. Eligibility Policy Update (Lisa)
 - a. D+ is still the cutoff based on the survey (75%)

75% of the staff said D+ is the cutoff. The dates have been synced up for next year's calendar. Roughly (except for mid and end semester), it's the first day of the month.

4. Placement Exams Update (Noah and Kassie) 3 minutes

Noah - the overall plan is to have students take the test with social distancing in different rooms with only a handful of students in each room. Might begin in late June at the earliest.

Kassie - hoping the few who need to take the test can do it when they take the math test.

5. Recruiting Diverse Staff Update (John) 2 minutes

A couple of parents are on the list to join the committee.

6. MSA Tours Update (John,Tom, Shannon) 3 minutes

Once school ends they will focus on this.

Tours will look different next fall even if we are on campus.

6th grade meet the teacher night was on Thursday last week. It went well with a Zoom to YouTube format. This will be looked at to be utilized for the upcoming year.

According to YouTube, 60 people watched it live. They were able to type in questions.

7. Orientation Update (John, Tom, Shannon) 3 minutes

They will work on this for the incoming 9th grade next.

8. Supplemental Online Learning Update (Emily) 3 minutes

This is looking different moving forward for next year, so this is on hold for now.

9. Changing to One Platform Update (John) 5 minutes

Financially, Google Classroom makes the most sense. Training will be offered before next school year. Supplemental/alternative platforms do not have to be removed, but should be included into the teachers Google Classroom as needed/if possible.

A decision has not yet been made about strictly going to one platform. This will be discussed later in the summer once we know where we will be teaching. It would be nice to utilize inhouse training for the staff rather than to hire out.

10. Planning for Next Year Update (John) 5 minutes

There are 7 different plans/options schools have identified of what school might look like next year.

Only 2 would work for MSA given our current staffing and physical layout of the buildings and our resources.

Plan for distance learning or in person. Other models will not likely work for MSA. The problem is our bussing situation because we do not control our bussing. The hardest part is how do we get our kids to school with the guidelines? The bussing is a large hurdle to

overcome.

There will likely not be much of a hybrid. Teaching during the day and online at night is too taxing and would be difficult to make work.

Hybrids have not been ruled out totally, but to make them work there are too many big hurdles to overcome to get campus ready for students/staff who would show up.

John is not directly talking with neighboring districts, but he is monitoring their procedures.

Should enrollment be a concern if we don't follow what other districts are doing? Where distance learning is going well, they are picking up extra students. This is actually how some schools are recruiting. Parents could essentially/ potentially jump ship once these decisions are made. It would be good to know ahead of time what the plan is.

Is there a plan to pay teachers extra for planning extra courses/curriculum over the summer because prep for teachers will be double?

There is no money in the budget to fund work over the summer. We cut a lot of expenses to make the budget balance this year. There are other parameters that need to be put in place. We put everything around our schedule for this emergency plan. Teachers need to have full plans moving into next year. Teachers should be paid for this, or it's not going to happen. A teacher survey needs to go out about what did and did not work for distance learning and what it should look like for next year.

Have meetings been happening? Is there PD scheduled for the summer?

Teachers have been struggling with this. We need planning time to meet and to work. There are numerous standards that need to be covered in an online format.

We need to discuss rigor for next year. We need to discuss how this looks with our mission. If we can figure out what we need, we can let families know what they need to do/know for next year. We need a message to our families who want to keep students at MSA. We need to provide clear confidence to these families that we have plans in place.

Joell has had parents who are on the waitlist or who were accepted who are confused about what this means for next year. Everyone is waiting to see what happens, so families don't know what the fall will bring.

Joell would like to provide a statement to send out to families about our rigor and what our expectations will be. She and John will work on a statement. Beginning with distance learning in the fall, we will need to have much more rigor. Distance Learning will obviously look different moving forward, otherwise we are not meeting our goals and missions as a school.

We cannot make a decision until July 2 because of MDE/the state.

We should be prepared to issue a statement on July 2 of what Distance Learning will look like at MSA. This will give parents a chance to decide what school they would like to attend in the fall.

One of our big selling points is community. When you're online it doesn't matter what class sizes are as a student. That is really more relevant to teachers.

11. Merit Promotion Procedure (Lisa) 5 minutes

- a. Current procedure is attached
- b. This was passed in September 2019 by the board

Social promotion has been brought up again. It has been decided that students will only pass with merit. This follows our vision and mission .

This should be across all grades. We need to know the kids in our classes have the skills, are taking responsibility, and are ready for the next class. Long term studies show in the short term there is a social benefit at first, but eventually it hurts them moving forward because they are inevitably behind. We do not want our rigor watered down. Part of our job is to try and give them access to whatever they may need. Some kids will not be successful. Then what do we do?

We shouldn't change our standards for a handful of students. We shouldn't do something different. If what we were doing isn't working for hundreds of kids, we would need to change. We are successful. We are the best school in the state. People look to us for what we offer and especially our rigor.

Tough conversations need to happen when we don't socially promote. It's uncomfortable, but it's part of what we need to do to keep the vision and mission of MSA.

What is the pressure right now? Are there families asking about social promotion?

Kirstin brought up concerns that involve MCA testing. When students are behind in certain classes and go to take their tests, some of these students have not heard or seen this material before. It seems like setting the kids up for failure.

Conversations overheard make it sound as if some teachers aren't being fair about social promotion. Are students being held to the same requirements for social promotion or not? Is this an equity issue? We need to ensure all students have the same opportunities. Are some students being socially promoted or given a break when other students are not? It has to be equal across the board. Are there implicit biases that go into this decision making? All students should have an equal opportunity and equal access. Implicit bias is part of our PD plan for next fall. The inequity is a concern. We do not want a blanket social promotion plan.

Last year we worked on procedures to make it more equitable. Putting procedures in place will help. People choose our school for the rigor, if we pull away from that, we will lose students and parents. Some parents are good at manipulating the system.

Who are the students who aren't moving on and why? We know there are systemic issues. What can we address here? How can we help and what changes can we make to help them? Socially promoting them to keep them with their class is something we shouldn't do. The excuse of being lazy, not doing work, not caring, needs to be looked at.

Some students who are repeating classes are still not passing. But if they fail again, how can we help them? It is not a great option to let them continue to fail. Are there other supports that students can have? If this is what sets MSA apart, not all students are a good fit for MSA. But we want these reasons to not be that we didn't meet their needs.

Part of the response needs to be applying rules/procedures to all students. We should not wait until the end, but other supports need to be in place to help teachers support the students who are in need.

Is there a certain point where that grade is still an F with supports?

There is only so much we can do to support students, and we need to show the work. For some students, if they feel a teacher is looking down on them or doesn't like them, they are not likely to work for that person. For them, the relationship is key. If they don't feel respected or valued, they are less likely to work for that person. We need to look at it from the start. It's frustrating to hear a teacher say one thing during a meeting, but hear them say the opposite after. It would be better not to sugarcoat what is being said at a meeting. The relationship between students and teachers is important. If for a reason that student and teacher clash, and there are no other options for a teacher to begin a new relationship. If it is a personality clash, our students are limited. Our school is small, and that isn't an option most of the time.

We need to have something in writing. Let's look at the reasons why some kids are perceived to be socially promoted over others. Then we could have proof to show that this is the reason why for moving forward or holding back. We are training them to be good citizens and good people. It's not just the job it's the daily day to day. Kids still need to do the work. We need a policy to show the kids.

Maybe MSA is the wrong fit. We are a choice school. It's not always our student's choice when parents are making them stay here. Sometimes parents want a sibling to get in. We need to look at the whole picture of the student to support them to give them a chance. There are numerous reasons kids leave MSA. Kids have been saying they are here for other siblings for years.

Kirstin and Emily need to feel safe to have the ability to address inequity with the admin and not be punished for this. A constructive conversation needs to happen. We need to make sure that it is an important thing for us to state concerns to ensure there aren't equity issues here. It's an issue of leadership and needs to be equitably applied. It's important.

It's time for more complicated conversations.

Our PD for next year will focus on inequity. We need to look at Student Support Meetings as well.

12. Changing Electives for next year because of possible distance learning (5 minutes)

Engineering will not work as an online course. Cheri would like to change to a different class for next year, Astronomy. Maggie would like to switch Speech to something else for next year. Kerri and Jen need to change some of their courses because much of it isn't applicable for online.

Jen isn't sure what other schools doing for art. It is difficult to determine what art courses work well for distance learning. The rigor is gone right now, and she can't be there to help them.

Music is missing the ensemble time. Right now it's focused on solo. It's too much screen time. It's not fun anymore.

PE has received positive comments. They required some interactive assignments with siblings/parents. They focused on engaging. What they have come up with has been successful, so far. Health only missed out on one unit. They worked on outside the box learning and activities. Numerous positive responses from kids and families have been received.

A number of students want to go into yearbook or other courses to change their electives.

Other districts are suggesting not offering enrichment courses so students have time to focus on core courses. Should some of these courses be removed?

How do I teach PE when kids need to wear masks?

Teachers need some direction about whether they can make changes for courses moving forward.

Will MSA be 100% as it always has been? If we need to focus on rigor, then should this look different?

When will teachers know if they can change their classes or not?

If a teacher has an elective and wants something that will work better for distance learning, then a change can be made. We are better off going forward with something that will work.

John's intent is to keep everyone hired and working. We keep enrichment courses, but they will look different from core classes. Furloughing teachers is something we want to do. This could drive kids away. This is part of the rationale of keeping as much of your current programming. Elective/enrichment courses can be changed. We can change and adjust as needed. It can be in a short amount of time.

This will be discussed at the staff meeting on Wednesday.

We're going to keep the titles but change the course? Speech can be twisted/shifted to poetry. And still get some of the fundamentals.

If engineering needs to be changed to astronomy as a necessity, there is flexibility.

What about courses that need to make a huge pivot in music and art? Where is the support and planning and pay for this?

Instrumental stuff can be done. Theory can be taught.

When do these decisions happen to change things?

Do students get placed in the replacement course?

We want a decision to be made when all of this will be decided for MSA.

Distance Learning and In Person plans need to be made.

Can there be distance learning plans and in person plans? Can there be a distance learning schedule and an in person schedule?

Things need to be thought about differently.

Middle school kids are just placed in enrichment. Why would we try to make the teacher not be truthful with the class.

Why is the title and description not changing?

Having two separate plans/schedules moving forward would be wise. We are talking about extra preps moving forward.

Is hybrid completely out of the picture? Could electives meet occasionally?

Colleges are planning for different scenarios.

13. Math Curriculum changes (Noah) 5 minutes

Changes are not significant as to what and how they are learning material. Looking at CPM curriculum. It is a curriculum where everything is established, there are teacher resources provided.

Our past curriculum was great, but cannot be maintained or brought up to date.

CPM mathes our philosophy. This is a good direction to go. We will plan to change the name of classes. It makes it more clear what is being taught. Course descriptions and content will make it clear what is being taught.

Students who are not on track to graduate have not had a good way to get them back on track, once they get to Integrated II, Integrated III and Pre-Calc could be taken as a hybrid course and still take Calc as a senior. It is not clear what this course would look like. It is for students who are behind and are not going to graduate.

Most summer school options do not go beyond Algebra II.

The course description is not an opportunity to go faster. It's to help students stay on track.

Not holding it as a traditional class is something we may need to look into.2021-2022

What will be built into the class for those who struggle in the Integrated (9th grade) class?
Smaller class sizes

What about MS Math 1, if students fail it, then they will be behind?

Yes, it will still be the same as right now, but they could move to the Integrated 9th grade class and could maybe be on track to graduate.

Maybe those students will be in the integrated 9th grade class should be offered more than 1 class credit, so they are working harder and spending more time on it.

At the Hmong Academy, they switched over all at once, against the advice of the company's coach, and it didn't go as well. They suggest that MSA start in 6th the first year and implement over time?

The Integrated system allows for a faster opt-in system and the math department has been piloting some of it in a few classes. They plan to jump in, but not next year.

Next Meeting: Will be July 13 from 10am-12