

HIGH SCHOOL @ MSA

**Sponsored by
MSA Parent Team**

FOCUS

MSA provides a rigorous, quality and balanced secondary education by offering courses that meet or exceed the requirements of Minnesota graduation standards in all areas. MSA requires students pass biology, chemistry, physics, algebra, geometry, pre-calculus, and calculus. In addition, high school students (grades 9-12) are required to take 5 courses each in English and Social Studies, 3 years of Spanish and Physical Education, 2 semesters of Fine Arts, and 1 year of Health. All students are required to take the equivalent of 6 courses (12 credits) per semester. Students are held to high academic and behavioral standards and are expected to self-advocate to achieve these expectations.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

The MSA website (www.mnmsa.org):

[Daily announcements, Calendar of Events, Homework Assignments, Teacher Contact Information](#)

Check the site often for daily announcements, notices of important meetings and extra-curricular events, teacher cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses, and even homework assignments for many subjects.

The following are documents you may want to print from this website as references:

[Math and Science Academy Course Handbook](#)

Provides detailed descriptions of required and elective courses offered by MSA.

[Math and Science Academy Student Handbook](#)

Gives information regarding MN and MSA graduation requirements, student expectations, and school policies. The Director reviews the Student Handbook with students each fall. Compliance statements are signed and returned to the school by parents and students.

[Student Academic Action Plan](#)

Outlines possible strategies that students, parents and teachers can take to improve grades. Can be customized to address a student's specific needs and objectives.

[MSA Board of Directors and Parent Team Information](#)

Contact information for members of MSA's Board of Directors and Parent Team are available on the website. If you have questions or concerns, feel free to contact these individuals. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend BOD meetings, held on the first Thursday of every month, and Parent Team meetings, held on the second Thursday of every month.

TESTS

MSA administers a variety of standardized tests including the following:

MCAII (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment) State required tests that measure student progress in reading, math and, beginning in 2008, science. It also measures school progress in meeting the No Child Left Behind requirements. These tests are in transition during the 2006-2007 school year. Changes will be noted at each grade level.

PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) This test is taken to practice for the SATs. In 11th grade, it is taken to qualify for scholarships. PSAT test results are given to the students in mid-December.

BST (Minnesota Basic Skills Test) Writing exam that will no longer be given after the 2006-07 school year.

PLAN (ACT Preliminary Tests) These tests are taken to practice for the ACT test and were provided to MSA at no charge in 2006-07. These tests may be continued in the future as an additional opportunity to practice for standardized testing if they continue to be provided to the school at no charge.

This information was compiled by the MSA Parent Team in January, 2007 and is meant as a helpful resource to parents. We recommend that you review all MSA official documents for current information/requirements.

HIGH SCHOOL @ MSA (cont.)

EXTRA-CURRICULARS, SPORTS AND SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Extra-Curriculars

Successfully juggling extra-curricular activities and upper level coursework is especially challenging in high school. Colleges are interested in well-rounded students, not just those with good grades. While participation in extra-curriculars is important, it should not jeopardize students' academic achievement.

Sports

A goal of MSA is to offer students a quality sports program. For high school students, MSA currently offers cross-country in the fall, basketball in the winter and baseball in the spring.

Service

A goal of MSA is to provide students with a sense of community by requiring them to complete a Community Service Program prior to graduation. MSA is currently working towards this goal by establishing a volunteer program. There are also service opportunities available through some of the established extra-curricular clubs such as the Outreach Team, the Spanish Club, and National Honor Society.

MISCELLANEOUS

Honors vs. Non-Honors

The choice of Honors or Non-Honors grading is currently offered in the following high school courses: Physics, Chemistry, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, Geometry, and American History. Because requirements for honors vs. non-honors Distinction may vary from class to class, it is best that parents contact the individual teacher to see which is appropriate for their student.

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9th Grade

FOCUS

Concentrate on maintaining a good GPA and becoming involved in volunteer activities because grades and extra-curricular activities are now compiled on your transcript that will be used in the college application process. Most students take full year courses in English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Spanish, Physical Education, and semester courses in Computer Programming and Speech. 9th graders who maintain a 3.0 GPA will be eligible to apply for the National Honor Society early in 10th grade.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

Personal Transcript (MSA office)

Review your transcript for accuracy. Ensure all coursework, grades and extra-curricular activities are listed correctly.

MSA Listservs

Listservs are MSA's way of communicating important information quickly via e-mail. Sign up to automatically receive e-mail information from MSA at www.mnmsa.org.

SAT Website (www.collegeboard.com)

This site provides information about college (including a month by month "To Do" list of college preparations for 9-12 grades), majors and careers. You can also sign up to have an SAT question sent to your e-mail address every day for practice. Once you receive your PSAT score report from MSA, this site allows you to create a personalized study plan based on your PSAT scores at www.collegeboard.com/psatextra.

Extra-curricular Activities Handout (MSA office)

MSA offers participation in over 20 extra-curricular opportunities for students – a very large number for a school our size. Parents, students and staff can work together to get a club started if there is interest in one that is not currently offered.

TESTS

PSAT – Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test

9th graders take this test for practice only. It is administered by MSA in October, the fee is waived. PSAT test results are given to the students in mid-December.

MCAII – Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment

The MCAII writing test will be administered by MSA in May to all 9th grade students.

EXTRA-CURRICULARS, SPORTS AND SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

National Honor Society

This is a national organization honoring students who demonstrate excellence in scholarship, leadership, service and character. Applications are first available to students with a 3.0 GPA in late spring of 9th grade, with submission due early in the 10th grade school year. Students must pick up their own applications before the end of the school year. Eligible 10th, 11th, and 12th graders who are not members also have the opportunity to apply. Once inducted, students must maintain a 3.0 GPA and perform 30 hours of service to remain eligible for NHS. Susan Mooney, a Social Studies teacher at MSA, is the advisor.

MISCELLANEOUS

Driver's Education

Driver's Education is not offered at MSA. Instruction is offered through District 833 (information available in the MSA office) and private companies. Students may qualify for a permit at age 15 and a license at age 16.

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10th Grade

FOCUS

Continue to focus on grades and extra-curricular/volunteer activities in preparation for college. Most students take full year courses in English, Math (Pre-Calculus in most cases), Science (Chemistry in most cases), Social Studies, Spanish, Physical Education, and semester courses in Health and Art. Start thinking about Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) as a possibility for next year.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

Personal Transcript (MSA office)

Continue to monitor for accuracy. Every 10th grader receives a copy of his/her transcript from MSA's Director in the fall.

Study Groups

As the level of difficulty in coursework increases, it is important for students and their families to understand the benefits of study groups. Members of a study group can help each other understand the course material better by working together to solve problems and providing motivation to complete homework. Students often gather in an MSA classroom or the public library after school, or meet at homes or the library in the evenings.

SAT Website (www.collegeboard.com)

See 9th grade information.

PSEO Presentation at MSA

In Minnesota, PSEO offers high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to take courses at eligible post-secondary institutions. Students must meet admission requirements but do not pay for tuition, fees, or books. Each year, a representative from Century College comes to MSA to explain their PSEO program in detail to students. The date of the visit is included in advance in the Daily Announcements and parents are also welcome to attend. Following the Parent Team meeting on February 8, 2007, a special PSEO presentation for parents will be given by a Century College representative.

“College and Careers” May Term Class

Students spend class time researching colleges and careers of their choice. This class is most relevant for 10th and 11th graders. The information presented in this class is available to 11th graders who have not taken the class and are participating in an Explorica tour during May Term.

“PSAT Prep” May Term Class

Students are given tips and practice questions to improve performance on the PSAT. The class is first offered to 10th graders and then 9th graders if space remains.

TESTS

PSAT – Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test

10th graders take this test for practice only. It is administered by MSA in October, the fee is waived. PSAT test results are given to the students in mid-December.

MCAII – Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment

In May 2007, the MCAII reading and writing tests will be administered by MSA to all 10th graders.

Beginning with the 2007-08 school year, only the MCAII reading test will be administered by MSA in May to all 10th graders

PLAN (ACT Preliminary Tests) This test was taken by 10th graders in October 2006 to practice for the ACT test and were provided to MSA at no charge in 2006-07. Results were returned to the students in January 2007. This test may be continued in the future as an additional opportunity to practice for standardized testing if they continue to be provided to the school at no charge.

This information was compiled by the MSA Parent Team in January, 2007 and is meant as a helpful resource to parents. We recommend that you review all MSA official documents for current information/requirements.

10th Grade (cont.)

BST – MN Basic Skills Testing

This writing exam will be administered by MSA for the last time at the end of January 2007 to all 10th grade students.

PSEO Assessment Testing

Century College and MSA work closely to provide the PSEO opportunity to MSA students. If you are considering a PSEO course at Century College as a junior, you must pass appropriate assessment tests (see www.century.edu for assessment testing dates, times and campus location) and notify the MSA office of your intention to take PSEO classes next school year. To ensure all graduation requirements are being met, students must receive prior approval of course selection from MSA.

Students pursuing PSEO at a school other than Century College must independently make arrangements for testing and admissions and receive prior approval of course selection from MSA to ensure graduation requirements are being met.

EXTRA-CURRICULARS, SPORTS AND SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

As the admissions process gets more competitive, colleges are looking beyond grades to see students' extra-curricular experiences. The ability to participate in extra-curricular activities while maintaining a good GPA demonstrates strong organizational skills, leadership qualities, and the ability to prioritize.

If you are not yet a member of the National Honor Society and have attained or maintained a 3.0 GPA in 10th grade, applications are available in late spring, with submission due early in the 11th grade school year. Students must pick up their applications before the end of the school year. Once inducted, students must maintain a 3.0 GPA and perform 30 hours of service to remain eligible for NHS. Susan Mooney, a Social Studies teacher at MSA, is the advisor.

MISCELLANEOUS

Parking Policy

Licensed student drivers may apply for a parking permit but, due to space limitations, the spaces are assigned in this priority: 1) part-time PSEO students and out of district students 2) car pools 3) seniors attending MSA full-time 4) juniors 5) sophomores. If more applications are received than there are parking spaces, a waiting list will be created and, as spaces become available during the school year, assignments will be made from the waiting list.

Prom

All 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students are invited to attend Prom in the spring.

This information was compiled by the MSA Parent Team in January, 2007 and is meant as a helpful resource to parents. We recommend that you review all MSA official documents for current information/requirements.

11th Grade

FOCUS

Continue to focus on grades and extra-curricular/volunteer activities in preparation for college. Most students who remain at MSA full-time (they take no PSEO classes) will take full year courses in Art, English, Social Studies, Spanish, and Physical Education. Completion of Calculus and Physics (both full year courses) are also required by the end of 12th grade. A student and parents may work with MSA to determine if the student should take both these classes in 11th grade or one in 11th grade and the other in 12th grade. If the student belongs to a math or science study group, this group may be an effective and valuable resource. Therefore, you may want to consult with other families in the group to determine what they are choosing to do. At this point, it may be helpful for you to look ahead and determine how many graduation requirements remain to be taken in 12th grade. Students must take 6 courses/12 credits to remain full-time.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

Personal Transcript

Continue to monitor for accuracy. Every 11th grader receives a copy of his/her transcript from MSA's Director in the fall.

Study Groups

See 10th grade information.

College Entrance Exam Websites

SAT (www.collegeboard.com) and ACT (www.act.org)

These sites offer lots of information about college preparation for both students and parents. On these sites, students independently sign up for testing (typically in the winter or spring of their junior year).

College Fair

Field trip in October to the Minneapolis Convention Center open to 11th and 12th graders. Students may speak with college representatives from across the nation as well as sign up to receive more information from the colleges of their choice. Bus fee required. Parents are also welcome to attend.

Century College – MSA Course Equivalents Handout (MSA office)

This matrix is designed for PSEO students taking classes at Century College. It lists MSA courses required for graduation and their Century College equivalents. Students are responsible for ensuring the appropriate PSEO course equivalencies for MSA graduation requirements are being taken.

College Visits

If higher education is in your future, you may want to start visiting colleges during your junior year. Many area colleges kick off their informational seminars and group tours for juniors in mid-October during Education Minnesota Professional Conference (a.k.a. MEA) weekend. Check the websites of local colleges you're interested in for more information. Most colleges allow you to schedule a visit online. MSA considers pre-arranged college visits an excused absence.

You should also consider spending time in the summer between your junior and senior year visiting colleges if you are still undecided about where you want to go. Colleges continue to offer tours and appointments with admissions during the summer months. Again, check the websites of local colleges for information. If you may be interested in visiting a private college in Minnesota during the summer, one good site is www.mnprivatecolleges.org.

Minnesota Office of Higher Education Website

www.getreadyforcollege.org

This website provides information to help high school students prepare, select, and pay for post-secondary education. It has many free, helpful, downloadable documents such as Campus Visit Checklist, Picking the Right College, Preparing for College Entrance Exams, Tips for Writing Application Essays, and Your Guide to Paying for College.

This information was compiled by the MSA Parent Team in January, 2007 and is meant as a helpful resource to parents. We recommend that you review all MSA official documents for current information/requirements.

11th Grade (cont.)

TESTS

PSAT – Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test

11th graders take this test to qualify for scholarships and practice for SATs. Administered by MSA in October. Fee is waived. PSAT test results are given to the students in mid-December.

MCAII – Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment

The MCAII math test is administered in May to all 11th grade students.

ACT (www.act.org) and/or SAT (www.collegeboard.com)

Colleges accept the ACT and/or SAT tests as part of the admissions process. These tests are offered several times throughout the school year but are NOT administered by MSA. Sign up is available on the respective websites. 11th graders may take these tests in preparation for applying to colleges. These tests may be retaken without limit, but a fee is required each time you apply for a test date. If you are planning to go to college, note that you should sign up for an ACT and/or SAT test date during the summer between your junior and senior year. Fall of your senior year is the latest time to take this test if you plan to apply for admission to college for the fall term in the year you graduate from MSA.

Assessment Testing for PSEO

Century College and MSA work closely to provide the PSEO opportunity to MSA students. If you have not taken a PSEO course at Century College and plan to as a senior, you must pass relevant assessment tests (see www.century.edu for dates, times and location on campus) and notify the MSA office of your intention to take PSEO classes next year. A student pursuing PSEO at a school other than Century College must independently make arrangements for testing and admissions and receive prior approval of course selection from MSA to ensure that all graduation requirements are being met.

EXTRA-CURRICULARS, SPORTS AND SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Participation in extra-curricular activities at MSA plays an important part in creating a friendly, close-knit atmosphere. MSA depends on its older students to help lead and organize activities that only those of their age and abilities can do. MSA encourages older students to mentor and train the younger students and keep the momentum of our successful programs going from year to year.

If you are not yet a member of the National Honor Society and have attained or maintained a 3.0 GPA in 11th grade, applications are available in late spring, with submission due early in the 12th grade school year. Students must pick up their applications before the end of the school year. Once inducted, students must maintain a 3.0 GPA and perform 30 hours of service to remain eligible for NHS. Susan Mooney, a Social Studies teacher at MSA, is the advisor.

MISCELLANEOUS

Parking Policy

See 10th grade information.

Prom

11th graders are responsible for the Prom's planning and fundraising, while the seniors provide suggestions for the site. All 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students are invited to attend the Prom.

Open Lunch

Juniors and seniors may leave the school campus during their lunch period if they have qualifying GPAs or community service. Applications are available in the MSA office. Approved students must sign out and sign back in at the MSA office each time they leave and return to campus.

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12th Grade

FOCUS

Continue to focus on grades and extra-curricular activities in preparation for college. Most students who remain at MSA full-time will take full year courses in English and Social Studies. Completion of Calculus and Physics (both full year courses) are also required by the end of 12th grade. In most cases students will take several electives. 11th and 12th grade electives at MSA are determined each year by student interest and resources available. Independent study opportunities are also available upon request if resources are available. MSA does not allow part-time students. Between PSEO and MSA coursework, all students must carry a full course load (6 courses/12 credits per semester).

The college admissions application process should begin in earnest in the fall of your senior year, for colleges tend to admit a significantly higher percentage of early applicants. Many colleges accept applications on a rolling basis, which means that these schools review and decide on applications as they are received until there are no openings left in the entering class. Other types of admissions plans - Early Decision and Early Action - involve an earlier admissions deadline. Early Decision programs are binding, which means that, if the application is accepted, the applicant promises from the start to attend the school. Schools typically honor one another's binding decisions so if you renege on an early decision at one school, it is unlikely that another competitive school will accept you. Early Action plans are better because they are non-binding and give students the benefits of early notification without the obligations of early decision. Even if accepted, students are free to apply to other schools and to compare financial aid offers.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

Personal Transcript

Continue to monitor for accuracy. Every 12th grader receives a copy of his/her transcript from MSA's Director in the fall. If applying to colleges, you will fill out a Transcript Request Form in the MSA office indicating each college that should receive your transcript.

Study Groups

Continue to utilize your peers as a resource for completing coursework.

College Entrance Exam Websites

See 11th grade information.

College Fair

See 11th grade information.

Century College – MSA Course Equivalents Handout

See 11th grade information.

www.fafsa.ed.gov/MSA Financial Aid Presentation

MSA holds a financial aid seminar in the fall. If college is in your future, January of your senior year is when you need to apply for financial aid. While the figures you submit on the form are supposed to come from current W-2 forms that may not have been mailed out by employers yet, submitting good faith estimates are allowed. The sooner you submit the application, the sooner colleges can extend financial aid offers. Also, colleges usually offer work-study programs on a first-come, first-served basis. If you plan to apply for a work-study to help finance college, you need to submit the FAFSA as early as possible.

Minnesota Office of Higher Education Website

www.getreadyforcollege.org

This website provides information to help high school students prepare, select, and pay for post-secondary education. It has many free, helpful, downloadable documents such as Tips for Writing Application Essays, Your Guide to Paying for College, and Tips for Completing the FAFSA.

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12th Grade (cont.)

TESTS

SAT – Scholastic Aptitude Test

The SAT is NOT administered by MSA. Under most circumstances, fall of your senior year is the latest you can take this test and still apply to college for next year's fall semester. A fee is required when applying for a test date. The SAT is made up of 3 components: Critical Reading, Mathematics and Writing.

ACT – American College Test

The ACT has 5 components: English, Mathematics, Reading, Science, and Writing (optional). October is the latest time to take this test if you plan to apply for admission to college for next year's fall term. A fee is required when applying for a test date.

EXTRA-CURRICULARS, SPORTS AND SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Even after formal admittance, most colleges require reporting of grades and extra-curriculars for the entire senior year.

MISCELLANEOUS

Parking policy

See 10th grade information

Prom

See 11th grade information

Open Lunch

See 11th grade information

Yearbook

MSA does not work exclusively with any particular photographer and students are responsible for senior photos. If a student would like a senior picture in the yearbook, a photograph or digital equivalent must be submitted to the yearbook staff. The yearbook staff also requests submission of a baby photo and message by the parents for all seniors as well. Deadlines for submitting both the senior and baby photos are early in the second semester of the senior year.

Senior Class Trip

Traditionally, each senior class determines whether to participate in a class trip. ALL plans must be approved by the Board of Directors in advance.

Graduation

Yes, it's what you've been working towards all these long years. In the past, MSA has reserved Woodbury's Central Park amphitheater for graduation ceremonies in early June. Space is limited, so each family is allotted a certain number of seats (usually 8-10, depending on class size) for guests. A reception for graduates and their guests follows the ceremony in one of Central Park's conference rooms.

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