



Grading Handbook

2021-22

The information in MSA’s grading handbook has been approved by the Academics Committee. Teachers and administration will support the procedures and guidelines detailed in this handbook.

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Academic Grades

All students at MSA must earn at least a D- or better in each of the required courses (except where it is noted in the math and Spanish program – see page 7-8 for the math and Spanish grading details). A student must successfully complete a course to be awarded a credit. If a student does not complete a core course or receives a failing grade, the student must repeat the course in order to fulfill the middle school and high school graduation requirements.

Grade Marks, Percentages, Grade Point Average (GPA)

The table below lists letter grades, percentages, and the GPA that corresponds with the letter grade.

Grade marks, I, W, R, and P are used for grading outside of the A-F scale:
I (incomplete), W (withdrawal), R (repeat), P (pass)

Grade Mark	High Value	Low Value	GPA
A	100.0	93.0	4.00
A-	92.99	90.0	3.67
B+	89.99	87.0	3.33
B	86.99	83.0	3.00
B-	82.99	80.0	2.67
C+	79.99	77.0	2.33
C	76.99	73.0	2.00
C-	72.99	70.0	1.67
D+	69.99	67.0	1.33
D	66.99	63.0	1.00
D-	62.99	60.0	0.67
F	59.99	0.00	0.00
I	n/a	n/a	n/a
R	n/a	n/a	n/a
W	n/a	n/a	0.00

Incomplete Grade Mark: I

An incomplete letter grade of “I” may be issued by the teacher only for the following reason:

- An excused absence the last week of the semester (up to five school days before the semester end).
No other absences will be granted an incomplete prior to the last week of the semester.

An incomplete grade “I” will not be issued for the following reasons:

- The student has an F in the class.
- The student has not had any excused absences the last five days of the semester.
- The student has unexcused absences the last five days of the semester.
- Ten or more excused or unexcused absences for the semester, unless the student has an ongoing health condition and documentation is in the student’s health file.

Criteria that should be met when a student is issued an incomplete:

- The student has five school days beginning the first school day after the end of the semester to complete any missing assignments or tests. The five school days applies to the end of the school year (Semester 2).
- If the student does not complete the missed coursework within five school days, the missed work will be given a zero and the incomplete will now become the letter grade.

Withdrawal from a course (first 10 days of the semester): W

Middle school students

Parents/guardians of middle school students will contact the Middle School Assistant Director when requesting a withdrawal from an enrichment course in the first ten days of the school year.

High school students

High school students will contact the High School Counselor to request a withdrawal from the course. The decision may also include the High School Assistant Director.

Withdrawing from a semester or year-long class		
<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Drop or Withdrawal</i>	<i>Letter mark on transcript</i>
Day 0-10	Student is dropped from the class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No letter grade • No list of course on transcript

No withdrawals will be granted after the 10th day of semester 1 or semester 2. Each day of school counts as one day, not including weekends or no school days.

Repeat Course: R

Any student who fails a course or does not meet the criteria for passing will automatically be scheduled to repeat the course. However, students can choose to repeat a class. The following the criteria applies:

1. The same course will appear twice on the transcript.
2. The highest grade earned will be listed on the transcript.
3. The course with the lower grade will be issued an R for repeat. No credit will be given for courses labeled as a repeat. The course that has the worse grade will be issued an R for repeat. No credit will be given for the course with an R for repeat.
4. The student’s counselor will make sure the grade for the repeated course appears correctly on the student’s transcript.
5. PSEO courses are not eligible.

Pass/Fail Grades

Students in grades 11 – 12 may serve in the role of a Teacher Assistant for a class. In this case, the class will be listed on the student’s transcript and they will receive a Pass/Fail grade. No credit will be issued and the Pass/Fail grade does not impact the GPA.

Recording Grades

Skyward Family Access is the location where parents/guardians and students can check grades and assignments. MSA teachers will update grades within two weeks of any assignment, test, quiz, lab, etc. Teachers are expected to define expectations for grading in each course’s rubric.

Grade Appeal Process

A student or parent/guardian may contest a failing grade to the Assistant Director by filing a written appeal. If they are not satisfied with the decision of the Assistant Director, then the parent/guardian may appeal to the Executive Director.

Grade Point Average (GPA) Information

GPA Definition

The GPA (grade point average) is the average obtained by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of credits.

Credit Criteria for the GPA

Each year-long course at MSA is worth 1.0 credit for passing and each semester-long course is worth .50 credit for passing. A failing grade will receive no credit and the class must be repeated to pass.

Middle School GPA

MSA middle school students in grades six through eight will have a GPA that is calculated throughout middle school:

Semester 1 GPA (Semester 1 grade mark calculated to the equivalent GPA)

Semester 2 GPA (Semester 2 grade mark calculated to the equivalent GPA)

Year-to-date GPA (For year-long classes, the Final grade is calculated for the year-long GPA and applied toward the cumulative GPA; for semester classes, the Final grade is calculated for the year-long GPA and applied toward the cumulative GPA)

Cumulative GPA (All Final grades throughout grade 6-8 are calculated toward the Cumulative GPA)

High School GPA

The GPA for high school students starts over in grade nine. The middle school GPA does not follow to high school. The high school GPA can be important for college admissions. High school GPA will be calculated throughout high school grades 9-12 by using the below criteria:

Semester 1 GPA (Semester 1 grade mark calculated to the equivalent GPA)

Semester 2 GPA (Semester 2 grade mark calculated to the equivalent GPA)

Year-to-date GPA (For year-long classes, the Final grade is calculated for the year-long GPA and applied toward the cumulative GPA; for semester classes, the Final grade is calculated for the year-long GPA and applied toward the cumulative GPA)

Cumulative GPA (All Final grades throughout grade 9-12 are calculated toward the Cumulative GPA)

Calculating the GPA

To calculate the GPA follow this chart as an example:

Final grade	GPA for letter grade	Earned Credit	Total GPA
A-	3.67	.500	1.835
C+	2.33	1.000	2.330
B+	3.33	.500	1.665
A	4.00	1.000	4.000
		3.000 total	9.830 total

To determine the total GPA for each letter grade, multiply the GPA by the earned credit.

Example – the letter grade A- equals 3.67; $3.67 \times .500 = 1.835$

Continue to do this will all other classes.

Divide the total GPA for all classes (9.830) by the total earned credits (3.000).

$9.830/3.000 = 3.276$ GPA

Credits and Earned Credits

Credit Values

Courses assigned a grade mark scale of A-F will receive credit for the class upon a passing grade of at least a minimum of a D- or better.

Credit value of .500

The following courses are issued .500 credit when passed:

- Semester-long course
- Year-long every other day courses
- Some before or after school high school courses for credit

Credit value of 1.000

The following courses are issued 1.000 credit when passed:

- Year-long course
- Some before and after school high school courses for credit

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses

Advanced Placement (AP) courses at MSA are not given any extra credit value for the course.

Post-Secondary Educational Options (PSEO) Courses

PSEO courses are given 1.000 credit for a semester-long course. PSEO grades, credits, and courses will be added to the student's high school transcript and calculated into the GPA.

Failing a Course or Not Meeting Criteria for Progression

Merit Promotion Procedure

MSA believes both the content and the skills learned in all MSA classes are important not only to that class, but also to success in subsequent classes. Therefore, in all 6-12 non-elective and non-enrichment classes, MSA will only promote students who have successfully passed a class by earning at least a D- (please see Math and Spanish Class Requirements for their grading expectations which may require a higher passing grade). This means when a student fails a core class, the class will be repeated until it is successfully passed. This may interfere with a student's ability to take the next class in the sequence, prevent a student from advancing with peers, and could impede graduating on time. This decision is not left up to the teacher's, administration's or a parent's discretion.

Notification of Retaking a Course

Students who fail a course or do not meet the criteria for passing the course will automatically be scheduled to retake the course by the start of the first day of the next school year.

Math Criteria for Class Progression

Below is the progression chart for math. Students are not allowed to skip a class and must follow the below grading criteria for the math progression.

Math Course	Grade	Grade needed to pass to move on to next progression	Students who received the following grade will retake the course indicated below
MS Math I	6 th	D- or better	F ⇔ MS Math I
MS Math II	6 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇔ MS Math II
Integrated Math I	6 th	B- or better	C - F ⇔ Integrated Math I
MS Math II	7 th	D- or better	F ⇔ MS Math II
Integrated Math I	7 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇔ Integrated Math I
Integrated Math II	7 th	B- or better	C - F ⇔ Integrated Math II
Integrated Math I	8 th	D- or better	F ⇔ Integrated Math I
Integrated Math II	8 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇔ Integrated Math II
Integrated Math III	8 th	B- or better	C - F ⇔ Integrated Math III
Integrated Math II	9 th	D- or better	F ⇔ Integrated Math II
Integrated Math III	9 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇔ Integrated Math III
Pre-calculus	9 th	B- or better	C - F ⇔ Pre-calculus
Integrated Math III	10 th	D- or better	F ⇔ Integrated Math III
Pre-calculus	10 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇔ Pre-calculus
Calculus/AP Calculus	10 th	B- or better	C - F ⇔ Calculus
Pre-calculus	11 th	D- or better	A - D- ⇔ Calculus
Calculus/AP Calculus	11 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇔ Calculus
Calculus/AP Calculus	12 th	D- or better	F ⇔ Did not meet graduation req.

Spanish Criteria for Class Progression

Below is the progression chart for Spanish. Students are not allowed to skip a class and must follow the below grading criteria for the Spanish progression.

Spanish Course	Grade	Grade needed to pass to move on to next progression	Students who received the following grade will progress or retake the course indicated below
Spanish 1A	6 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇒ Spanish 1A
Spanish 1B	6 th	B- or better	C - F ⇒ Spanish 1B
Spanish 1A	7 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇒ HS Spanish I
Spanish 1B	7 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇒ Spanish 1B
Spanish II	7 th	B- or better	C - F ⇒ Spanish II
Spanish 1B	8 th	D- or better	A – D- ⇒ HS Spanish I
Spanish II	8 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇒ Spanish II
Spanish III	8 th	B- or better	C - F ⇒ Spanish III
HS Spanish I	8 th	D- or better	F ⇒ Spanish I (will not be on track to graduate)
Spanish II	9 th	D- or better	F ⇒ Spanish II*
Spanish III	9 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇒ Spanish III
Spanish IV	9 th	B- or better	C - F ⇒ Spanish IV
HS Spanish I	9 th	D- or better	F ⇒ Spanish I (will not be on track to graduate)
Spanish II	10 th	D- or better	F ⇒ Spanish II*
Spanish III	10 th	D- or better	F ⇒ Spanish III*
Spanish IV	10 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇒ Spanish IV
Spanish V	10 th	B- or better	C - F ⇒ Spanish V
HS Spanish I	10 th	D- or better	F ⇒ Spanish I (will not be on track to graduate)
Spanish II	11 th	D- or better	F ⇒ Spanish II*
Spanish III	11 th	D- or better	F ⇒ Spanish III*
Spanish IV	11 th	D- or better	F ⇒ Spanish IV*
Spanish V	11 th	D- or better	F ⇒ Spanish V
HS Spanish I	11 th	D- or better	F ⇒ Spanish I (will not be on track to graduate)
Spanish II	12 th	D- or better	F (did not meet graduation requirement)
Spanish III	12 th	D- or better	F (did not meet graduation requirement)
Spanish IV	12 th	D- or better	F (did not meet graduation requirement)
Spanish V	12 th	D- or better	F (did not meet graduation requirement)
HS Spanish I	12 th	D- or better	F (did not meet graduation requirement)

*Follow the Spanish flowchart for progression and to determine if a student is on track to graduate. Students who enroll at MSA after 8th grade must pass every Spanish course through grade 12.

Student Transcripts and Modified Pass/Fail Gradebook

Middle School Transcript

The following student criteria is listed on a middle school transcript:

- Student's name, address, birthdate, gender, grade, and graduation year
- Courses taken per grade level, credits assigned or failed, S1, S2, and Final grades
- Earned credits
- Cumulative GPA (grade point average)
- High school courses taken in middle school (including grades and credits for these courses).

High School Transcript

The following student criteria is listed on a high school transcript:

- Student's name, address, birthdate, gender, grade, graduation year, and diploma date upon graduating from MSA
- Courses taken per grade level (including AP and PSEO courses), credits assigned or failed, S1, S2, and Final grades
- Earned credits
- Cumulative GPA (grade point average)

Modified Pass/Fail Gradebook (Procedure for Modified Curriculum)

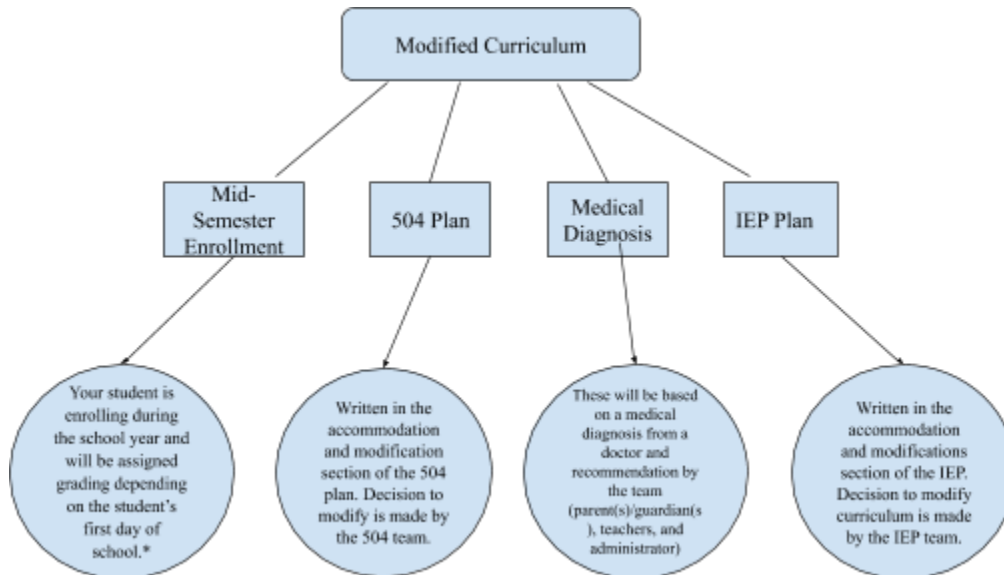
The following definitions and procedures are an option a team of teachers, parents, and student can choose for both middle school and high school students whose curriculum is modified. Please refer to the definitions and flow chart below to determine whether a student's course curriculum can be defined formally as modified.

Modified Definition: Modified curriculum is a fundamental change to the material and/or learning to a different level. Modifications allow for access to standards, but the student does not need to pass the standards in the same way as non-modified curriculum peers would in order to pass a class. The modified content may look different in different classes and for different students.

Minimum Modified Content Requirement: If 25% or more of the assigned curricular content of the course in a given semester is modified for the student, the course may be designated as a modified pass/fail gradebook for that given semester. The student's assignment scores would be entered into a separate Skyward coursebook. The modified curriculum can be graded with a letter grade or with P for pass or F for fail.

See next two pages for determinations for modified curriculum and assigning a modified pass/fail gradebook.

Determinations for Modified Curriculum



Medical Absences Modified Pass/Fail Gradebook Directions

There are two ways in which a student may obtain a modified gradebook due to medical issues and absences, however, both ways require an official copy of a doctor's diagnosis and a doctor's expected range of recovery. Both ways may result in evaluating the student to determine eligibility for a 504 plan or special education. an official granting of a 504, however, it is not always required. If more than 25% of the assigned work will be modified, than a modified pass/fail gradebook may be put in place, based on the following two methods:

- 1) Parent Initiated: A parent should contact the child's teacher, counselor, or assistant director to discuss academic or grading concerns, per the chain of command. If a parent is requesting evaluation for section 504 or special education, they should make that request clear.
- 2) Team Initiated: Attendance data is reviewed at monthly grade level meetings. If there are students who have excessive (more than 20) absences (they do not have to be consecutive, and may be a combination of excused and unexcused) then a member of the team will call the parent and attempt to set up a meeting between parents/guardians, teachers and administration to discuss the issues and determine interventions that makes sense for the student. Including the need for a modified pass/fail gradebook

Unenrolled Students*

Students who are unenrolled for more than 15 days because of non-medical reasons should follow the transfer student criteria.

Students who are unenrolled for more than 10 days because of medical reasons should have a team meeting as soon as feasible to discuss the potential for having a modified pass/fail gradebook. This might be based on the length of the absence, the work completed, and whether MSA work was completed.

*Definition of unenrolled:

When a student has 15 consecutive school day absences during the regular school year, regardless if they are excused or unexcused, without receiving instruction in the home or hospital shall be dropped from the roll and classified as withdrawn pursuant with Minn. Stat. § 126C.05, Subd. 8.

When this situation arises, MSA will follow the following procedures: (1) Prior to the 15th consecutive absence, the school will notify the parent/guardian of the student to determine if the student intends on returning to MSA. (2) Once the 15th consecutive school day absence has occurred during the regular school year, regardless if they are excused or unexcused the school will determine if the student has formally withdrawn or has been expelled in accordance with the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act.2654.

If the parent/guardian provides the proper documentation proving the student is receiving instruction in the home, treatment facility or hospital, the student will remain unenrolled and not be withdrawn.

Transfer Students or Class Change Directions

New Student: If a student transfers to MSA after day 10 of the start of the school year then they will automatically receive a modified pass/fail gradebook because they would have missed a significant portion of the curriculum.

Students who change classes after the 10th day of class

- If a teacher recommends a class change for the student after day 10 but before the beginning of semester two, the student will not automatically receive a modified pass/fail gradebook.
- Student/parent requests for a class change after the first 10 school days of either semester 1 or semester 2, the student will receive a modified pass/fail gradebook because they missed a significant portion of the curriculum. For semester 1 changes to a year-long class, the team could evaluate at the end of the semester to determine if a pass/fail is needed for the second semester.
- Teacher recommendation for a student to move down a level in the class will receive a W for the class they were withdrawn from and may receive a modified pass/fail gradebook for their new class for the semester at teacher discretion and department approval.
- For students switching classes at the semester end – the student would receive the letter grade they received at the semester and then may be placed on a pass/fail gradebook for semester 2 at the teacher’s discretion and department approval.

Policy 503 - Excused Absences

Because the definition of modified curriculum includes fundamental changes to the material and/or learning to a different level and reduced or changed coursework of 25%, a team meeting may be triggered if the student’s attendance is 90% or less regardless if the absences are excused, unexcused, or a combination thereof.

Explanation for Differences in Attendance Criteria

90% or missing more than 20 days (This based on a state requirement)

15 days for unenrolled status (This is based on a state requirement)

10 days for transfer students (This matches our withdrawal policies and the reason is optional.)

High School Credits Earned in Middle School

Any high school class taken in middle school will be added to a student's high school transcript. The following list of classes will also be listed on the middle school transcript. Below are courses that will be added to the high school transcript taken in middle school:

Spanish II or higher

High school Spanish II is taken as an 8th grade student if the student started sixth grade in Spanish 1A and passed both Spanish 1A in sixth grade and Spanish 1B in seventh grade.

Integrated Math III or higher

Integrated Math III is typically a ninth-grade class if the student passed the progression of math classes starting in sixth grade in Middle School Math II. Approximately twenty-five percent of sixth grade students begin in Integrated Math I and progress to Integrated Math III in eighth grade. Students who take Integrated Math III in middle school will have this high school class added to their high school transcript.

U of M math classes (UMTYMP)

Some MSA families choose to have their students take math courses through UMTYMP rather than at MSA. Once registration with UMTYMP is complete, families will provide MSA with a copy of their student's registration and the name of the course being taken. Students will be scheduled into a 7th hour high school study hall in order for them to attend UMTYMP courses, and this may impact their elective choices for the year.

MSA math courses and UMTYMP courses do not follow the same progression. UMTYMP students will receive 0.5 credits for each successfully completed semester (grade of B- or higher) of the two-year high school component. Once the entire two-year high school component is successfully completed (grade of B- or higher), MSA will adjust the student's transcripts so that they receive 1.0 credits for each semester.

UMTYMP students will receive 1.0 credits for each successfully completed semester (grade of B or higher) of the three-year calculus component. After each semester in the calculus component has been successfully completed, families will provide MSA with a copy of the student's University of Minnesota transcript. MSA does not weight college course grades, so the university grade (not the high school grade) will be recorded on the student's transcripts.

Student Reports

Progress Reports

Families and students will receive two mid-semester progress reports during the school year. One mid-semester progress report for Semester 1 and another mid-semester progress report for Semester 2. These will be in paper form and sent to each student's postal address listed in Family Access.

Extracurricular Eligibility Policy

Please reference the Extracurricular Eligibility Policy 510.1 on the MSA website, About/Board of Directors/Policies or the Student/Parent Handbook.

Report Cards

Students are mailed one report card per year to the student's postal address listed in Family Access. The final report card is mailed two weeks after the last day of school.

Requesting Transcripts

Official high school transcripts can be requested through the high school Academic Guidance Counselor by going to the MSA website/Student Support tab/Counseling. Unofficial middle school and high school transcripts can be requested through the High School Counselor or by contacting the MSA office.

Transcripts for Graduated Students

Transcripts are available for students who graduated. Final transcripts are available for the newly graduated students on the following Thursday after the last day of the calendar school year.

Recognizing Student Achievement

Honor Rolls

MSA announces Semester One and Semester Two Honor Rolls. Honor Rolls are posted in each MSA building and sent to the MSA community. The following is the Honor Roll criteria along with a total of at least four MSA credits per semester:

GPA	Honor Roll
4.000	Distinguished Honor Roll
3.999-3.450	High Honor Roll
3.449-2.950	Honor Roll

Presidential Awards for 8th and 12th grade students

Students are eligible for the following awards at the end of the school year. Awards will be mailed along with the final year report card by the end of June.

Middle School President's Awards

President's Award for Educational Excellence recognizes MSA students who have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.50 or higher at the end of their 8th grade year.

President's Award for Educational Achievement recognizes MSA students who have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.30-3.49 at the end of their 8th grade year.

High School President's Awards

President's Award for Educational Excellence recognizes MSA students who have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.50 or higher at the end of their 12th grade year.

President's Award for Educational Achievement recognizes MSA students who have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.30-3.49 at the end of their 12th grade year.

Class Ranking

MSA does not officially recognize student class rank or Valedictorian status. Due to small class sizes and the academic rigor of our course work, we believe that class rank does not depict an accurate assessment of a student's potential.

Gifted and Talented Students

MSA has accelerated curricula, small class sizes, and is a rigorous, college-prep school. Course offerings are intended to meet the needs of all students, including those identified as gifted learners.

New Students or Transfer Students

Students who enroll at MSA in any grade should refer to the Academic Expectations and Guide to Success at MSA for each grade. Academic Expectations are located on the MSA website under the Current Families tab/Handbooks and Guides.

Course Credit Recovery Options and Procedures

Credit Recovery is a term used to describe a wide variety of educational strategies and programs that give high school students who may have failed a course the opportunity to redo a course or retake a course, sometimes through alternative means. MSA believes very strongly in student success and achievement and works hard to ensure that all students are engaged in learning content needed to be successful in life and in their postsecondary endeavors. The following definitions and procedures are intended to inform students and families of the credit recovery options available at MSA. ***Credit Recovery should only occur if a student has failed a course and only if the failed course impedes the student's expected graduation date at MSA.***

MSA Course Repeat

A student who has received a final grade of an F in a course at MSA will repeat the same course the following year to relearn and master course content and standards. Courses in the subjects of English, History and Science can be taken concurrently.

For example: A student who has failed Ancient World History at MSA in 9th grade will be required to complete the same course in 10th grade. The student may also take another History course in 10th grade simultaneously.

Summer School Course

A student who has received a final grade of an F in a course at MSA may have the option to take summer school at MSA, an online course, or an equivalent course through the family's home district and outside of MSA during the summer months. This option should only be used if the equivalent course is offered and only when the failed course impedes the student's expected graduation date at MSA.

For example: Because Calculus is required to graduate from MSA and Math courses cannot be taken simultaneously, a student who has failed Integrated Math II in 9th grade at MSA can attend a summer school course in the home district which is equivalent to Integrated Math II. After confirmed successful completion of the summer course, the student may enter 10th grade in Integrated Math III at MSA.

Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO)

A student who is behind a year in a required subject course at MSA may seek out course equivalent options through PSEO. Through the PSEO option, students may take the equivalent of a 1-year MSA course in a semester, potentially allowing for 2 courses to be completed in a school year.

Students may take a maximum of 2 Summer School courses through their home district to meet the MSA graduation requirements and receive an MSA high school (grade 9-12) diploma.

Courses through Summer School or PSEO must be pre-approved by the MSA Academic Counselor to ensure the courses taken will meet MSA's course standards and requirements.

Any grades received from a summer course will not be included in the calculation of MSA's GPA. The course will be labeled on the MSA transcript with a Pass/Fail grade and as a transfer course. The failed MSA course will remain on the student's MSA transcript.

MSA must receive a transcript or official completion grade from the school or district where the course was taken from upon completion of the summer school course.

In the case of a course being repeated at MSA, the failed MSA course will continue to appear on the MSA transcript. Once the failed course is successfully repeated at MSA, the GPA will be calculated from the repeated course grade rather than the initial course grade and the initial course grade will be changed to a NG (no grade).

If you are still unsure of the options available to you, please contact MSA's high school counselor for more information.