



# Academic Expectations and Guide to Success at MSA Grade 8

Welcome to eighth grade at the Math and Science Academy! Please read the following academic information and sign the agreement. Math and Science Academy has accelerated curricula, small class sizes, and is a rigorous, college-prep school. Regardless of a child's previous academic scores on tests or grades in school, ALL eighth grade students will be placed in the following classes:

## Eighth Grade Courses

All eighth grade students are registered for the following courses:

English 8

Physical Education (every other day) with Art 8 (every other day)

Physical Science

Global Studies

Spanish II or High School Spanish I (see information below)

Enrichment courses - students will be placed in one of the following courses:

- Band (Band was a choice on the registration form); OR
- Orchestra (Orchestra was a choice on the registration form); OR
- Astronomy (Semester 1 or Semester 2) AND
- Creative Writing (Semester 1 or Semester 2)

## MATH

All new eighth grade students will be given a math placement exam. The math placement exam will determine if the student will be placed in Integrated Math I, Integrated Math II, or Integrated Math III. Returning students will be placed in the next course in the math progression if they met the math grade requirements in 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

## SPANISH

New eighth grade students who have taken at least one full year of Spanish will be given a Spanish placement exam. Otherwise the new 8<sup>th</sup> grade student will be placed in High School Spanish I. Returning students will be placed in the next course in the Spanish progression if they met the Spanish grade requirements in 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

## Grading

MSA has two semesters; Semester 1 and Semester 2. Students receive grades for Semester 1, Semester 2, and the Final. Semester 1 grades are finalized and posted on Skyward Family Access the Thursday after the semester end. Semester 2 and Final grades are finalized and posted the Thursday after the last day of school.

Students who receive a **final grade of an F** for the following classes are required to retake the course in 8<sup>th</sup> grade (see next page for math and Spanish requirements):

English 8

Physical Science

Global Studies

## Math Grade Expectations

Below are the math expectations and progression for eighth grade students:

Course	Grade level	Must receive the following grade to progress to next class	Student who receive the below grades for the course in 8 <sup>th</sup> grade must retake the course in 9 <sup>th</sup> grade
Integrated Math I	8	D- or better to progress to Integrated Math II	F ⇨ Repeat Integrated Math I
Integrated Math II	8	C- or better to progress to Integrated Math II	C+ - F ⇨ Repeat Integrated Math II
Integrated Math III	8	B- or better to progress to Integrated Math II	C+ - F ⇨ Repeat Integrated Math III

## Spanish Grade Expectations

Below are the Spanish expectations and progression for eighth grade students:

Course	Grade level	Must receive the following grade to progress to next class	Student who receive the below grades for the course in 8 <sup>th</sup> grade must retake the course in 9 <sup>th</sup> grade
Spanish II	8	C- or better to progress to Spanish II	D+ - F ⇨ Repeat Spanish II
Spanish III	8	B- or better to progress to Spanish III	C+ - F ⇨ Repeat Spanish III
HS Spanish I	8	D- or better to progress to Spanish II	F ⇨ Repeat HS Spanish I

Student and Parent/Guardian Expectations (pages 3 and 4).  
Signature required on page 4.

## Student and Parent/Guardian Expectations

### All students are expected to:

- Expected to be challenged on a daily basis:
  - Students should be committed to moving through materials at a demanding rate and have the ability to advocate for themselves as needed. Students will need to be able to manage their time wisely and be committed to spending a lot of time on their school work, both during school and out of school.
- Complete their assignments daily:
  - Expected amount of daily homework for a **MIDDLE SCHOOL student** is approximately **1½ - 2 hours**.  
*These are estimates that may vary between students for different subjects*
  - Expected amount of daily homework for a **HIGH SCHOOL student** is approximately **2 - 3 hours**.  
*These estimates may vary significantly for high school students who enroll in Advanced Placement (AP) courses.*
- Write assignments in some sort of an organizer.
  - Teachers often instruct students at the beginning of every class to write assignments down.
- Check teacher websites and Google Classroom.
- Be prepared for tests.
  - Students usually know about major tests one to two weeks before the test and need to make sure they study every night for at least 10-15 minutes until the night before the test, when they should study for a longer time.
  - Check the MSA test and community calendar. Problem solve when having trouble with homework.
  - Students should try this progression of steps: Look at their notes, look at the class website, contact the teacher in a timely manner, check in with the teacher during teacher office hours (before or after school), or contact a classmate for help.
- Manage their part in group projects.
  - When completing group projects, students are expected to use in-class time wisely, communicate with their project partners outside of class (phone, email, messaging, etc.), and communicate any problems or concerns promptly with their teacher.
- Pace themselves when working on projects.
  - Teachers usually chunk larger projects into smaller pieces, and students need to stay on top of those smaller pieces so they are not overwhelmed by the final due date.
- To prioritize school work over extra-curricular activities.
  - Schoolwork should come first. Students are expected to complete their assignments, even if they have many activities in one evening.
- Turn in work on time:
  - In middle school, late work receives point reductions/deductions.
  - In high school classes, teachers have discretion on whether to give credit on late work.
- Be respectful to others.
  - Students must take responsibility for their actions, for their community, and must follow the MSA Student Handbook.

**All Parents/Guardians are expected to:**

- **Be aware of the academic challenges at MSA.**
  - If your student struggles with school, you will be expected to help your student with study skills and organization.
- Read the school announcements daily.
- Provide a place for your student to study.
- Read their student’s organizer daily and help their student create a daily schedule to get all of their homework completed in a timely manner.
  - That can be a lot for a younger student to understand, and they need reminders to reinforce the message at home.
- Provide the resources to help students complete their assignments but not to do the work for the students.
  - This includes picking up a computer and turning all forms in before the first day of school.
- Help students balance their activities with their schoolwork by not allowing students to be over-scheduled.
  - Schoolwork should come first. Students are expected to complete their assignments, even if they have many activities in one evening.
- Check Skyward Family Access and class websites as necessary and contact teachers if you have any questions.
  - Parents may set up Skyward notifications if a student earns a grade below a certain level.
- Volunteer at MSA in whatever ways are possible.

**Additional Information**

Visit the MSA website at [mnmsa.org/Current Families/Handbooks and Guides](http://mnmsa.org/Current Families/Handbooks and Guides) to read about the following information:

- MSA Course Guide to see the progression from grade to grade
- Student Handbook

By signing below the parent/guardian and student acknowledge they have read the above Academic Expectations and Guide to Success at MSA:

Parent/guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_