



Math and Science Academy Distance Learning Plan
Executive Summary
March 30, 2020

Dear MSA Community,

The Math and Science Academy is implementing distance learning from March 30th to May 4th in compliance with an executive order from Governor Walz. Our distance learning plan supports the learning of all students at MSA with a goal to provide meaningful education while maintaining personalized connections. While we recognize that learning at home and online provides a different educational experience than what we are accustomed to, it also offers a unique opportunity to discover many things about ourselves that we wouldn't otherwise discover.

We acknowledge that our staff, students, and families may be facing unprecedented challenges during our distance learning period. We all need to be patient, supportive, understanding, and optimistic. Flexibility, adaptability, and communication are key skills that we will rely on to complete distance learning.

Please be patient during the first few weeks of MSA's distance learning experience. We realize that there are still questions to be answered and issues to be addressed. Our main goal is to get our students back in the "classroom," provide an engaging learning experience, and fulfill our role as one of the hubs of our community.

Go Dragons!

John Gawarecki
Executive Director
Math and Science Academy

Lisa Anderson
Chair, Board of Directors
Math and Science Academy

Math and Science Academy Distance Learning Plan

Executive Summary

Introduction

To act on the State's prevention and response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz issued Emergency Executive Order 20-02 to close schools temporarily and plan for a safe educational environment. The Emergency Executive Order directed schools to close beginning on Wednesday, March 18, 2020 through Friday, March 27, 2020, "to provide time for our schools to adequately plan for continuity of education during the COVID-19 pandemic for the purpose of preserving the health, safety, and lives of Minnesota's students, educators, and the broader."

This report summarizes the MSA plan for distance learning. It represents the work of the MSA staff, in conjunction with guidance offered by the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Health, as well as other state and local agencies that have collaborated to introduce distance learning in Minnesota school districts.

Every school district has been given the flexibility to create its own distance learning plan to address the specific needs of its students; as a charter school, MSA is doing just that. Through the diligent efforts of the staff, MSA is prepared to launch its distance learning plan beginning on Monday, March 30, 2020.

Summary of the Distance Learning Plan

This report summarizes information previously provided to the MSA community through the Director's email updates. Greater detail has been provided where possible, in order to outline the distance learning process. This new paradigm relies on our teachers' creativity, communication, and expertise to make the experience engaging and educational. Teachers must combine their standards-based subject matter with instruction about how to use distance learning tools.

To begin this opportunity, MSA teachers are sharing lesson materials and holding virtual office hours while students complete assignments and receive guidance. This is made possible through our 1:1 laptop and Chromebook program and the fact that our students have internet outside of school. MSA's staff is dedicated to facilitating meaningful learning as effectively as possible in these challenging and changing times.

The crucial areas of MSA's distance learning plan are included in the following sections of this report:

- Daily Schedule and Instruction Time
- Attendance
- Technology
- Material Pick Up/Drop Off
- IEP/504 Plans
- ACT/MCA/AP Testing
- Preparing to Learn from Home
- Activities
- Student Behavior During Distance Learning
- Featured Resources
- Example Student Schedule
- Schedule of Friday Office Hours

Daily Schedule and Instruction Time

Families should plan on a four-day weekly study schedule with the same classes each Monday and Wednesday and the remaining classes on Tuesday and Thursday. The schedule was designed so that a student will have no more than 4 or 5 classes per day.

On Friday, April 10, there will be no school. There will be no attendance or office hours that day. On Monday, April 27, there will be no school. Day 1 instruction for that week will not be made up on another day.

Office hours are scheduled for the days that teachers will offer instruction as well as 2 hours every Friday.

While a class may be scheduled for instruction on a particular day, there will be no set “classroom time” other than the teacher’s office hours. Teachers will post assignments online by 9 am on the day a class is scheduled for instruction. Most assignments will be due by 9 am the very next day.

Please check Skyward for your student’s daily schedule. A list of teachers’ office hours can be found at the end of this document.

Instruction time will be no more than 20 minutes per class per day, with approximately 60 minutes allocated to instruction time, learning tasks, and homework combined. AP classes may have higher expectations for overall student time.

Teachers will continue to use the test calendar. There will be no more than 3 assessments and/or projects due on a single day. MSA will continue to use the letter grading system.

Example Student Schedule

Each student schedule for distance learning represents the days on which teachers will post instruction and assignments for the subject matter listed. Office hours for teachers will coincide with the class listed for that day.

Example – Day 1: Day 1 will normally fall on a Monday. Any student who has Algebra I will have instruction and an assignment posted on Monday by 9 am. The assignment will be due at 9 am on Tuesday unless otherwise indicated. The Algebra I teacher will schedule office hours sometime during the day on Monday (and Friday).

A student may have 4 or 5 classes scheduled for each day. A student must check in with their advisory teacher by 1 pm for attendance purposes.

Attendance

Advisory teachers will take daily attendance. Students are required to check in with their advisors by 1:00 pm each day, Monday through Friday. Advisors will provide attendance instruction to their students.

If a student is ill, parents must call the MSA attendance line, as they have always done. If a student fails to check in with their advisory teacher for that day and there is no call to the MSA attendance line to record the absence as an illness, that student will receive an unexcused absence.

Juniors and Seniors who are enrolled at MSA part-time will report their attendance to Denice Fair by 1 pm, Monday through Friday.

Technology

Teachers have increased their use of online teaching tools and have updated their digital classrooms. Zoom or Google Hangout will be the online video conference platforms used by most teachers. One-on-one video communications between an individual student and a teacher will be recorded as a safety precaution.

Teachers will provide additional instruction about how to use any new online teaching or communication tools. The technology coordinator has developed videos to help students learn and access some of these new tools, also. This includes Zoom and Google Classroom video tutorials found under the Preparing to Learn from Home section.

Teachers know that not everyone has the same access to computer equipment and a strong wifi connection and have attempted to take this into account.

Please let your teacher(s) know if your circumstances hinder your ability to participate in learning or submitting your assignments in a timely manner.

Material Pick Up/Drop Off

Some teachers have learning materials to distribute such as art kits, lab supplies, and engineering items. Your teacher(s) will inform you of any additional “pick ups” or “drop offs” of learning materials or assignments.

General rules for pick up and drop offs are as follows:

- Will occur on Fridays
- Only for learning materials connected with art, lab, or engineering classes. There will be no paper homework or packets provided for other classes.
- Teachers will pack learning materials in brown bags (located in the Great Hall) and label the bags with students' names.

- The brown bags will include plastic bags for safe return of items according to the teacher's instructions.
- Teachers will notify students as to pick up and drop off times and will be present for pick up and drop off. Students will not be allowed into any other MSA areas or buildings at this time.
- Please contact the teacher if a student has an extenuating circumstance that prevents them from picking up their learning materials. A volunteer will deliver the materials to the student's home if necessary. However, delivery requests must be for valid reasons.

IEP/504 Plans

- IEP and 504 meetings will be held virtually, either by phone or Zoom. Students will continue to receive special education IEP service minutes.
- A personalized Google classroom has been created for each student on an IEP.
- Each student's teachers, EAs, and related service providers will be added as a "teacher" to the student's individual Google Classroom.
- Teachers will include copies to case managers if emailing a student and parent/guardian.
- Parents should contact case managers or 504 coordinators if a pattern arises of incomplete work or absences.
- Parents should contact case managers if assessments need to be read aloud or if a student needs something scribed for them.
- EAs will host live/synchronous classroom sessions for students with IEPs. Please [click here](#) for an EA schedule.

ACT/MCA/AP Testing

- ACT exams will not occur at MSA this year.
- Please continue to monitor your email for additional updates as they arise. For more information regarding national ACT test dates, please [click here](#) for the official ACT website.
- MCAs will not occur at MSA this year.
- Traditional face-to-face AP exam administrations will not take place for the foreseeable future. For each AP subject, there will be 2 different testing dates.
- The full exam schedule, specific free-response question types that will be on each AP Exam, and additional testing details will be available by April 3rd.
- This year's exams will only include topics and skills sequenced by the AP College Board through March 2020. However, the AP College Board does not require teachers to follow a prescribed order. For more information regarding AP testing, please [click here](#) for the College Board website.
- For the 2019–20 AP exam administration only, students can take a 45-minute online exam at home. Students will be able to take exams on any device they have access to. Taking a photo of handwritten is an option. Details will be forthcoming on April 3rd.

Preparing to Learn from Home – Online Distance Learning Resources

- If you cannot access Skyward, please contact Justin Gehring (justin@jcorps.com or 651-578-7507 extension 3504).
- Here are two trainings to visit as soon as possible regarding online learning tools:
 - a. Zoom
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXP1YSSYBkg&feature=youtu.be>
 - b. Google Classroom
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knZ1igmBqO4>
- General information is provided via the Distance Learning Website (<http://www.mnmsa.org/dl/>). Additional information and training will be provided by teachers.
- Become familiar with:
 - a. accessing your MSA email and the MSA web portal.
 - b. accessing the webpages your student's teachers provide.
 - c. launching into a Zoom meeting (see link above).
 - d. receiving and posting assignments through Google classroom (see link above).
- Spend some time preparing your learning area.
- Decide when your student will contact their advisory teacher each day for attendance. Remember this must be done by 1 pm.

Activities

- All participation in MSHSL spring activities at all member schools has been suspended. The suspension of participation includes fine arts and athletics. The definition of activities includes, but is not limited to, the participation in competitions, training, practices, scrimmages, and contests.
- The following events remain suspended indefinitely by the MSHSL.
 - Speech Section and State Tournaments
 - Music Contests
 - Visual Arts Competitions and State Festival
 - MSHSL State Robotics Tournament
 - MSHSL Clay Target State Tournament
- No decisions regarding the postponement or cancellation of other MSA spring activities have been made at this time.

All Spring activities are being closely monitored for status. Each activity is subject to an ongoing evaluation to determine if the activity will be postponed, rescheduled for a specific date, or canceled. Please refer to the MSA website and periodic emails for the most up to date information. Among others, MSA activities currently under review are sports, music and fine arts performances, the MSA carnival, prom, graduation, and the senior lock-in.

Student Behavior During Distance Learning

Students must follow the same behavior and clothing rules while participating in distance learning as required before the closure. Students are still expected to communicate with teachers and advocate for themselves as needed.

Dragon FIRE is a must for distance learning.

Focus

- Stay on task when using technology.
- Minimize distractions in your workspace.

Integrity

- Turn in your own work.
- Use only resources allowed for assessments.
- Always cite sources.

Respect

- Take turns commenting during group video chats.
- Make respectful comments and facial expressions when online.

Excellence

- Complete and turn in assignments on time.
- Always persevere and try your best.
- Help others who may need assistance.

Featured Resources

MSA Distance Learning and COVID-19 Information

<https://www.mnmsa.org/dl>

This link to the MSA website has information on the latest updates, information for preparing for distance learning, daily schedules, frequently asked questions (FAQs), school counseling support, updated testing information, and COVID-19 health resources.

Learning Resource - Khan Academy

<https://www.khanacademy.org>

This contains resources for all subjects including math and computing for all ages. It uses the traditional U.S. grade system and provides common material.

Food and Community Resources

[Christian Cupboard](#)

[City Pages](#)

[Friends in Need](#)

[Hunger Solutions](#)

[Washington County Resource List](#)

Counseling Services

<https://www.mnmsa.org/students/teacher-websites/counseling-office/>

This link will take you to the Counseling Department page on the MSA website where students can access information about college/career, academic, and social-emotional services.

[DL \(Distance Learning\) Student Schedule](#)

[Schedule of Friday Office Hours](#)