



Grading Handbook

2019-20

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, he/she 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: W

Withdrawing from a class is always a difficult decision. Middle school and high school students must withdraw within the first ten school days to have no penalty. Please read the important information below for students who are considering withdrawing from an enrichment course in middle school or any course in high school:

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
Day 11-end of week 7	Student is withdrawn from the class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W (withdrawn) is issued for the course • Course will be listed on the transcript with “W” for withdrawn
Week 8-end of semester	Student is issued a grade for the course and withdrawn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student is issued the current grade on the exact date of notification to withdraw. • Student will be issued a semester grade, and if a year-long class, will be given a W for withdrawn for Semester Two

Repeat Course: R

Any student who fails a course or do not meet the criteria for passing will automatically be scheduled to repeat the course. However, students can choose to repeat a class can do so following the criteria upon completion of the course:

1. The same course will appear twice on the transcript.
2. Whichever course has the better grade will be given the letter grade.
3. 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. Students must contact the school's scheduler to request the Repeat Course new grade be updated on the student's transcript.
5. PSEO courses are not eligible.

Pass/Fail Grades

Teacher Assistants will receive a pass (P) or fail (F). No credit will be issued for this class and the Pass/Fail grade will not be included in the GPA.

Recording Grades

Skyward Family Access is the location 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 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 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 is 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 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 progress or retake the course indicated below
Pre-algebra	6 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇒ Pre-algebra
Pre-algebra	7 th	D- or better	A – D- ⇒ Algebra I
Algebra I	6 th	B- or better	C - F ⇒ Algebra I
Algebra I	7 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇒ Algebra I
Algebra I	8 th	D- or better	A – D- ⇒ Algebra II
Algebra II	7 th	B- or better	C - F ⇒ Algebra II
Algebra II	8 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇒ Algebra II
Algebra II	9 th	D- or better	A – D- ⇒ Algebra III
Algebra III	8 th	B- or better	C - F ⇒ Algebra III
Algebra III	9 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇒ Algebra III
Algebra III	10 th	D- or better	A – D- ⇒ Pre-calculus
Pre-calculus	9 th	B- or better	C - F ⇒ Pre-calculus
Pre-calculus	10 th	C- or better	C - F ⇒ Pre-calculus
Pre-calculus	11 th	D- or better	A – D- ⇒ Calculus
Calculus/AP Calculus	10 th	B- or better	C - F ⇒ Calculus
Calculus/AP Calculus	11 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇒ Calculus
Calculus/AP Calculus	12 th	D- or better	A – D- ⇒ Meet grad requirements F ⇒ Will not graduate

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 1A	7 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇒ HS Spanish I
Spanish 1B	6 th	B- or better	C - F ⇒ Spanish 1B
Spanish 1B	7 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇒ Spanish 1B
Spanish 1B	8 th	D- or better	A – D- ⇒ HS Spanish I
Spanish II	7 th	B- or better	C - F ⇒ Spanish II
Spanish II	8 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇒ Spanish II
Spanish II	9-12 th	D- or better	F ⇒ Spanish II
Spanish III	8 th	B- or better	C - F ⇒ Spanish III
Spanish III	9 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇒ Spanish III
Spanish III	10-12 th	D- or better	F ⇒ Spanish III (may not be on track to graduate)
Spanish IV	9 th	B- or better	C - F ⇒ Spanish IV
Spanish IV	10 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇒ Spanish IV
Spanish IV	11 th	D- or better	F ⇒ Spanish IV (may not be on track to graduate)
Spanish V	10 th	B- or better	C - F ⇒ Spanish V
Spanish V	11 th	C- or better	D+, D, D-, or F ⇒ Spanish V
Spanish V	12 th	D- or better	F ⇒ Not on track to graduate if started in grades 6-8 at MSA
High School Spanish I	New 8-12 th	D- or better	F ⇒ Spanish I (will not be on track to graduate)

Student Transcripts

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)

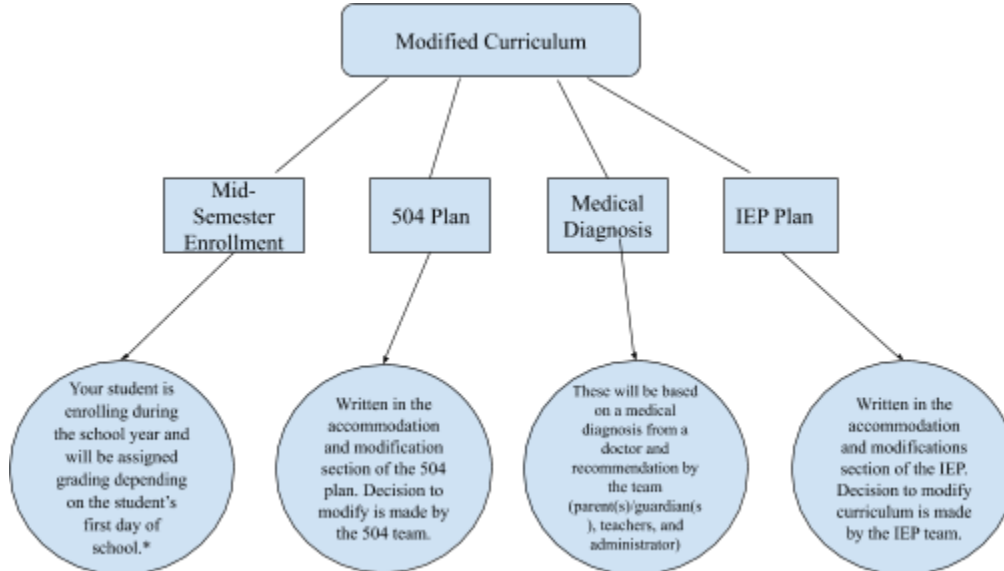
Modified Transcript (Procedure for Modified Curriculum and Transcript Indicators)

The following definitions and procedures apply to students whose curriculum is modified, which will also have an accompanying indication on their transcript for each course that was completed with modified curriculum. Please refer to the definitions and flow chart below to determine whether a student's course curriculum can be defined formally as modified, and under what circumstances their transcript would have an indication of modified curriculum.

Modified Definition: Modified curriculum is fundamental changes to the material and/or learning to a different level. The student will be given reduced or changed coursework to align with students specific needs and goals. 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.

Minimum Modified Content Requirement: If 15% or more of the assigned curricular content of the course in a given semester is modified for the student, the course will be designated as modified on the transcript for that given semester. The student's assignment scores would be entered into a separate Skyward coursebook. The modified curriculum notation will be included in all places and on all documents where any academic record takes place. In the event that a course is a year long course, the final grade will also have an indication that indicates that the grade includes modified content. The notation will be a footer at the bottom of the transcript with a statement indicating the course name and that the course was a modified content course.

Determinations for Modified Curriculum



Medical Absences Modified Transcript Directions

There are two ways in which a student may obtain a modified transcript due to medical issues and absences, however, both ways require a official copy of a doctor's diagnosis and a doctor's expected range of recovery. Both ways may result in an official granting of a 504, however, it not always required. If more than 15% of the assigned work will be modified, than a Modified Transcript may be put in place, based on the following two methods:

1. **Parent Initiated:** One way is that the parents/guardians of the student notify a member of the team and that member calls a meeting of the parents/guardians, teachers and administration to discuss the issues and to determine if a modified transcript makes sense for the students.
2. **Team Initiated:** At the monthly grade level meetings, the administration will bring a list of students who have less than 90% attendance. If there are students who have 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. Then, they can discuss the issues and determine if a modified transcript makes sense for the student.

Transfer Student Directions

If a student transfers to MSA after the 30th day of the start of the school year then they will automatically receive a modified grade because they would have missed a significant portion of the curriculum.

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 15%, 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.

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.

Algebra III or higher

Algebra III is typically a ninth grade class if the student passed the progression of math classes starting in sixth grade in Pre-algebra. Approximately twenty-five percent of sixth grade students begin in Algebra I and progress to Algebra III in eighth grade. Students who take Algebra 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.

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 published in the South Washington County Bulletin and the Woodbury Bulletin. The following is the Honor Roll criteria:

GPA	Honor Roll
4.000	Distinguished Honor Roll
4.000-3.450	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. The school is happy to have so many gifted and talented students enrolled however these students are not offered any additional course opportunities or a fast track in progression of courses.

New Students or Transfer Students

Students who enroll at MSA in any grade should refer to the Academic Agreements for each grade. Academic Agreements are located on the MSA website/Academics tab/Academic Agreements per grade.

Course Credit Recover 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 receive the educational 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 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 Algebra II in 9th grade at MSA can attend a summer school course in the home district which is equivalent to Algebra II. After confirmed successful completion of the summer course, the student may enter 10th grade in Algebra 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 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 academic school counselor for more information.