

Agency Purpose

The mission of the Minnesota State Academies (MSA) is to provide the highest level of self-sufficiency possible for deaf/hard of hearing and blind/visually impaired students in the state of Minnesota. Established in 1858, the MSA are statewide public schools that provide education and related services to students ages 0-21, who are blind, visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, including those with multiple disabilities. The MSA are composed of two separate and unique schools – the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind (MSAB), and Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (MSAD). Federal law mandates that services provided by the MSA meet the student's need for a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) within the least restrictive environment.

The decision to attend the MSA during the school year is made by an Individualized Educational Planning (IEP) team which includes the parent, the district of residence and MSA staff. For a student to enroll, the IEP team must decide that MSA provides the most appropriate placement. Students may also attend MSA to obtain social skills or for short-term skill development. (For more information, refer to M.S. 125A.69 Admission Standards.)

Core Functions

The MSA educate enrolled and short term placement students and/or support public schools to educate students to:

- ◆ develop self-esteem, social skills, leadership skills, and specialized skills like Braille or sign language;
- ◆ complete a course of study equivalent to public schools;
- ◆ earn a living, become integrated into the community, live on their own or in supported living arrangements;
- ◆ prepare for higher education or vocational training;
- ◆ access and utilize state-of-the-art technology to prepare for employment in the 21st century;
- ◆ acquire technology skills to access information otherwise inaccessible because of their disability and
- ◆ prepare severely, multiply-disabled blind children for adult life.

Operations

The range of services provided by the MSA in support of the agency's mission is unique and often complex when compared to most public schools, making the Academies a necessary option for school districts. The MSA have provided educational services to deaf and blind students for more than 140 years. Historically, the MSA were the only educational options available to deaf or blind students. If students were deaf or blind it was assumed that they would attend the MSA. Today most deaf or blind students attend school in their local community and the Minnesota State Academies are viewed as an extension of the school district. The Minnesota State Academies is a state agency that functions under the leadership of the Academies Administrator. Each special school operates under the direction of a director who is a specialist with expertise in its disability area (blindness at the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind and deafness at the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf). In addition, the board has reviewed its mission, vision and beliefs, developed a strategic plan to guide its improvement and is currently working on updating its facilities Master plan. See Link for details:

<http://www.msa.state.mn.us/About/mission.asp>

The MSA:

- ◆ provide services that would be prohibitively expensive or unavailable in public schools;
- ◆ provide direct and indirect educational services through a number of program options;
- ◆ provide academic year programs, which include preK-12 academics, early childhood intervention, transition, and programs for students with multiple disabilities;

At A Glance

The Minnesota State Academies (MSA) is a state agency made up of two unique schools serving deaf and/or blind students. MSA serves as a resource to families, school districts and educators throughout Minnesota and the Midwest region. Specifically, students are served as follows:

- ◆ ages 0-21 who reside in the state of Minnesota or the upper Midwest;
- ◆ in a special education environment with a residential component, providing 24 hour services;
- ◆ with additional disabilities, including physical and emotional needs.

- ◆ provide off-campus services in support of local school districts for non-enrolled students including specialized evaluation, direct teacher services, orientation and mobility training, and consultations;
- ◆ provide on-campus services in support of local school districts for non-enrolled students including weekend parent training programs, family and teacher visitation at the Academies to review specialized resources, short-term direct services such as basic skills testing remediation, independent living training, assistive technology training, extended school year programming and transition programs;
- ◆ help the state meet federal statutory requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA);
- ◆ provide access to a direct communication environment, comprehensive services, additional resources and increased opportunities which meet the individual needs of students as mandated by their IEPs; and
- ◆ offer mainstream courses in conjunction with the Faribault Public Schools which provide access to broader curriculum choices, advanced coursework, opportunities to increase skill in working with interpreters, and integration with non-disabled peers;
- ◆ provide independent living experience and career exploration in conjunction with South Central College and State Services for the Blind.

Budget

The total budget for the MSA for the 2008-09 biennium is approximately is \$30.4 million. This includes educational aides, all gifts, revolving and federal funds. MSA staff include approximately 200 full-time equivalent employees.

Of the total budget, the vast majority (78%) comes from direct state appropriations from the general fund. The Department of Education accounts for another 14% in the form of management aid reimbursements, tuition, and compensatory education revenue. The remainder of the budget is federal funding, employee deposits in tax shelter annuities, student deposits, and gifts. Additionally, approximately \$1.75 million in tuition from school districts for students attending the Academies is returned to the state's general fund.

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Dollars in Thousands

	Current		Forecast Base		Biennium 2010-11
	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	
<u>Direct Appropriations by Fund</u>					
General					
Current Appropriation	11,788	11,915	11,915	11,915	23,830
Forecast Base	11,788	11,915	11,912	11,912	23,824
Change		0	(3)	(3)	(6)
% Biennial Change from 2008-09					0.5%
 <u>Expenditures by Fund</u>					
Direct Appropriations					
General	11,199	12,493	11,912	11,912	23,824
Statutory Appropriations					
Miscellaneous Special Revenue	2,993	2,440	2,452	2,655	5,107
Federal	225	361	250	250	500
Miscellaneous Agency	261	261	265	265	530
Gift	47	250	48	48	96
Total	14,725	15,805	14,927	15,130	30,057
 <u>Expenditures by Category</u>					
Total Compensation	12,329	12,787	12,329	12,440	24,769
Other Operating Expenses	2,172	2,830	2,409	2,501	4,910
Capital Outlay & Real Property	12	0	0	0	0
Payments To Individuals	57	38	39	39	78
Other Financial Transactions	155	150	150	150	300
Total	14,725	15,805	14,927	15,130	30,057
 <u>Expenditures by Program</u>					
Resendtl Academies/Deaf&Blind	14,725	15,805	14,927	15,130	30,057
Total	14,725	15,805	14,927	15,130	30,057
 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	 185.5	 185.4	 175.8	 173.1	

Program Description

The Minnesota State Academies (MSA) provides educational opportunities to deaf/hard of hearing and blind/visually impaired students ages 0-21 throughout the state of Minnesota. Students attend the MSA when the family, school district of residence and Academies staff agree that MSA is the appropriate placement. Students may also attend to obtain social skills or for targeted short-term skill development.

Services Provided

The Minnesota State Academy for the Blind (MSAB) and the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (MSAD) are located about 1/2 mile apart on separate campuses in Faribault Minnesota. The Academies are governed by a seven member board which is appointed by the governor. Each school operates residential and educational programs unique to its disability. The two academies share a common mission to educate students who are blind/visually impaired or deaf/hard of hearing to their greatest potential. While the mission is a common one, the strategies to accomplish that mission are unique to each school. Teachers at MSAB and MSAD require specialized training and licensure in their respective disability areas and are "Highly Qualified" teachers. Prior to 1975, each school had a full complement of support services. In an effort to economize resources and reduce duplication, the two schools have combined the support departments including maintenance, buildings and grounds, personnel, the business office, nutrition, and health services.

MSAD

MSAD provides direct instruction to deaf/hard of hearing students by licensed teachers fluent in American Sign Language. Instruction and classroom environments are designed to include necessary adaptations unique to deaf/hard of hearing learners. MSAD is a 24-hour, language-rich environment, where American Sign Language and English are utilized to foster effective communication in a community with a critical mass of similar age, language peers. Children have direct communication access 24 hours a day. Mainstream opportunities are available within the local public schools to allow students to interact with their hearing peers. Other educational opportunities include core academics, transition programming, work study experience, functional life skill development, specialized behavioral programming, and specific instructional strategies designed to meet the needs of multi-handicapped learners. All student support services are provided by professional staff licensed and trained to work with deaf/hard of hearing students. Support staff includes licensed school psychologists, social workers, counselors, and speech/language pathologists. Due to staff shortages we have also contracted services for OT/PT and additional speech and language assistance. This has been necessary because these are required services on the students IEPs (Individual Education Plans). Approximately 75% of all academy staff members are deaf or hard of hearing, providing students with successful role models. Recreational and competitive activities provide students with opportunities to develop self-confidence, self-esteem, leadership and self-advocacy skills, knowledge and competence to apply to their future roles as productive, independent citizens.

MSAB

The educational process at MSAB is provided in an environment where a specialized curriculum, related support services and appropriate adaptations and modifications are available to all students. Unlike sighted children, blind and visually impaired children cannot access information in the same manner as their sighted peers. Thus the direct teaching of the skills necessary to overcome the loss of vision is critical. The curriculum taught at MSAB focuses on helping a blind/visually impaired child become a self-sufficient adult. The areas of curriculum instruction offered at MSAB include the following:

Program at a Glance

- ◆ Minnesota State Academies served deaf or blind students in 2007 – 2008 as follows:

Student Type	MSAD	MSAB
Day	56	17
Residential	78	35
Total Enrolled	134	52
Outreach	5	41
Summer	92	56
Total Served	231	149

- ◆ 51% of MSAD students and 75% of MSAB students present multiple disabilities.
- ◆ The Minnesota State Academies maintain 14 buildings with a total of 382,000 square feet and 69 acres of land.
- ◆ The Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf has two buildings that are listed on the National Historic Registry.

- ◆ development of skills to access the curriculum, including Braille, large print and or print with the use of optical devices;
- ◆ orientation and mobility skills for independent travel;
- ◆ independent living skills;
- ◆ career education;
- ◆ technology; and
- ◆ specialized expanded core curriculum to address the unique needs of blind children.

An example of this instruction is a summer transition program that focuses on functional skill development and is offered in conjunction with local schools and vocational rehabilitation assistance at MSAB.

Historical Perspective

The decision to enroll at the Academies is not an easy one for parents and/or school districts to make. Research indicates that if there is early identification of deafness or blindness, with timely and adequate specialized services by appropriately trained teachers, students can develop the tools to be successful, responsible, independent citizens. However, if students do not receive appropriate educational opportunities, the potential for future success and independence is diminished. In addition, the social-emotional needs of deaf/hard of hearing or blind/visually impaired students are unique and real. However, children with disabilities also have the same social-emotional needs as their non-disabled peers and have the right to:

- ◆ form an identity;
- ◆ have a peer group;
- ◆ participate in activities;
- ◆ develop their maximum potential;
- ◆ share life experiences; and
- ◆ feel good about who they are.

Some students who attend the Minnesota State Academies are able to participate in regular public school classes within the local public schools in Faribault, while also taking courses at the Minnesota State Academies. This opportunity provides students with the experience of being a participant in a class with non-disabled peers. Deaf students acquire skills in working with an interpreter and note-taker, while blind students learn to negotiate a sighted environment that is not specifically designed to meet their learning style.

The Minnesota State Academies provide support for teacher preparation programs. Student teachers work under the guidance of Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf licensed professionals. Currently, there are no preparation programs for teachers of the visually impaired in the state of Minnesota. As the current staff at MSAB reaches the age of retirement, it will become exceedingly difficult to find licensed teachers of the visually impaired. We are working with professionals in the state, as well as across the country, to find solutions to this staffing dilemma.

In the past ten years ('98-'08), renovations and asset preservation projects have added usable square footage to the Minnesota State Academies' campuses. On the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind campus, 20,000 square feet has been added to the main building consisting of educational classrooms, physical therapy areas, and office space. At the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (MSAD) campus, 9,000 square feet was recently renovated and brought back into service as educational classrooms, living skills training areas, and office space for the resource centers. These projects have increased the demand on heating, cooling, electricity, and janitorial services. Attention has been focused on upgrading the infrastructure of the campuses, including an electrical upgrade, fire protection, and air quality projects. Additionally, demands on the maintenance department have increased due to recent the capital bonding projects. The department has effectively handled these demands without additional cost by postponing other work and having staff handle the increased demands. At times this has increased our deferred maintenance.

Key Program Goals

The Board of the Minnesota State Academies has a defined mission, vision and belief statements that guide the direction of the Academies. These statements are reviewed on an annual basis and reflect input from the Site

Councils of both schools as well as other stakeholders of the Academies. See link for additional information: <http://www.msa.state.mn.us/About/mission.asp>.

- ◆ The MSA mission is to educate deaf/hh and blind/visually-impaired children to their greatest potential. The majority of children who attend the Academies do not enroll academically-achieving at grade level. Each student at the MSA has an IEP (Individual Education Plan) with individual goals for achievement.
- ◆ Another key program goal for the MSA is to prepare students for life and education after high school and for all students to graduate with a high school diploma.
- ◆ The highest priority goal for our central MSA operations departments is to create an environment that is clean, safe and healthy for our students and staff and to provide fiscally responsible, professional and efficient services for both MSAB and MSAD.
- ◆ Also, in large ways and small we are teaching our students to preserve the earth's resources, to "go green" and be ecologically friendly. We are attempting to save energy, recycle and go "paperless" whenever possible.

Key Program Measures

◆ **Graduation Success Rates**

- ⇒ Our graduation rates are above 98% and student drop-out rates are non-existent.
- ⇒ Of the 20 graduating seniors in the Class of 2008 at MSAD, 95% are enrolled in formal post-secondary educational programs upon graduation.
- ⇒ Five MSAB students graduated in 2008, three returned for continuing education, one enrolled in the Vector program and one returned to his home.
- ⇒ The comprehensive transition programs at both MSAB and MSAD is showing signs of great success. Students at MSAB between the ages of 18-21 attended South Central College in Faribault last year and gained confidence finding they were capable of successfully doing college work, developing independent living skills, and earning credits that can be utilized in their post high school education. Students from both MSAB and MSAD set transition goals which provide them with work experiences that integrate them in to the community.

◆ **Student Success Rate In Passing State Required Testing**

As special education facilities, progress monitoring via their individualized goals is measured annually. Our children's disabilities make them unique unto themselves and demonstration of proficiency must be done on an individual basis for many of them. We measure growth by looking at where they started and the progress they've made. Other students at the Academies take the Minnesota Standardized Tests and are able to compare their progress to their non-handicapped peers. All of our students are required to have three year evaluations as part of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process. There is extensive testing done at these three year intervals. Students whose IEPs deem it appropriate also participate in the Minnesota MCA 2's and the NWEAs (Northwest Education Assessments). Students whose IEPs do not deem it appropriate to take the Minnesota standardized tests may have their progress monitored via special assessments related to their disabilities. Those students who attend the Academy Plus program at MSAB do not take the standardized tests because their high school coursework is already completed.

Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (MSAD)

BST Class of	Number Passed at State Level			Number Passed at State Level	
	Reading	Writing	Math	Class of	Writing
2009	11 (65%)	9 (53%)	9 (53%)	2010	2 (17%)
2008	18 (95%)	13 (68%)	18 (95%)	2011	4 (44%)
2007	11 (65%)	10 (59%)	8 (47%)		

- ⇒ Less than 1% of students attending MSAD are exempt from taking Minnesota's mandated tests. All others take the tests and results are measured and compared to non-handicapped peers.

- ⇒ At MSAB 40% of students were ineligible to take the tests and took an alternative test due to secondary disabilities.
- ⇒ The Basic Skills Tests are not normed for blind/visually impaired students. The math test presents particular challenges for blind/visually impaired students as some questions are presented using graphs or diagrams.

◆ **Accreditation**

- ⇒ Accreditation for MSAD has been achieved through the CEASD (Conference of Educators and Administrators Serving the Deaf) organization. Accreditation is already in place through the North Central Association's school improvement cycle. MSAD is the only dually accredited school for the deaf in the State of Minnesota.
- ⇒ Accreditation is also in place through the North Central Association's school improvement cycle for the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind (MSAB).

◆ **Operations Measures**

- ⇒ Periodic reviews by external agencies validate quality and ensure standards are successfully met. These include: legislative audits, Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) standards, health standards, food inspection, and Department of Education reviews.
- ⇒ Review and consideration of student, parent, and staff driven evaluations of services.
- ⇒ We have an agency wellness committee that has organized health fairs for students and staff, created healthy snack policies for the schools, promoted healthy living and exercise and encouraged everyone to "get moving."
- ⇒ We have safety committees on each campus that meet quarterly to address safety issues in the environment. These groups are proactive in alerting us to potential dangers before they are problems.
- ⇒ Every year we are focusing on another "earth friendly" activity. Our students started an extensive recycling program, this year we are promoting the use of reusable shopping bags and the reduction in use of plastic bottles.
- ⇒ During the bonding cycle we are focusing our renovation and construction projects on saving energy and building "green."

Contact

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MINN STATE ACADEMIES

Program: RESENDTL ACADEMIES/DEAF&BLIND

Program Summary

Dollars in Thousands

	Current		Forecast Base		Biennium
	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	2010-11
<u>Direct Appropriations by Fund</u>					
General					
Current Appropriation	11,788	11,915	11,915	11,915	23,830
Technical Adjustments					
Pt Contract Base Reduction			(3)	(3)	(6)
Forecast Base	11,788	11,915	11,912	11,912	23,824
<u>Expenditures by Fund</u>					
Direct Appropriations					
General	11,199	12,493	11,912	11,912	23,824
Statutory Appropriations					
Miscellaneous Special Revenue	2,993	2,440	2,452	2,655	5,107
Federal	225	361	250	250	500
Miscellaneous Agency	261	261	265	265	530
Gift	47	250	48	48	96
Total	14,725	15,805	14,927	15,130	30,057
<u>Expenditures by Category</u>					
Total Compensation	12,329	12,787	12,329	12,440	24,769
Other Operating Expenses	2,172	2,830	2,409	2,501	4,910
Capital Outlay & Real Property	12	0	0	0	0
Payments To Individuals	57	38	39	39	78
Other Financial Transactions	155	150	150	150	300
Total	14,725	15,805	14,927	15,130	30,057
<u>Expenditures by Activity</u>					
Academy For The Deaf	5,852	5,969	5,822	5,906	11,728
Academy For The Blind	4,045	4,189	4,002	3,986	7,988
Academy Operations	4,828	5,647	5,103	5,238	10,341
Total	14,725	15,805	14,927	15,130	30,057
Full-Time Equivalents (FTE)	185.5	185.4	175.8	173.1	

MINN STATE ACADEMIES

Agency Revenue Summary

Dollars in Thousands

	Actual FY2008	Budgeted FY2009	Current Law		Biennium 2010-11
			FY2010	FY2011	
<u>Non Dedicated Revenue:</u>					
Grants:					
General	26	0	0	0	0
Total Non-Dedicated Receipts	26	0	0	0	0
<u>Dedicated Receipts:</u>					
Grants:					
Miscellaneous Special Revenue	2,097	2,195	2,230	2,281	4,511
Federal	284	267	250	250	500
Miscellaneous Agency	1	1	1	1	2
Other Revenues:					
Miscellaneous Special Revenue	316	211	183	183	366
Miscellaneous Agency	217	211	211	211	422
Gift	69	130	49	49	98
Other Sources:					
Miscellaneous Special Revenue	71	77	77	77	154
Miscellaneous Agency	40	53	53	53	106
Total Dedicated Receipts	3,095	3,145	3,054	3,105	6,159
Agency Total Revenue	3,121	3,145	3,054	3,105	6,159