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2014-15 Biennial Budget - State Academies

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Mission:

The Minnesota State Academies (MSA) are dedicated to the intellectual, communicative, social, emotional, and physical development of students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired and deaf/blind. Working collaboratively with students, families, schools and communities statewide, our mission is to provide exemplary, disability-specific learning opportunities, technology, and materials, enabling students to reach their fullest potential.

Statewide Outcome(s):

State Academies supports the following statewide outcome(s).

Minnesotans have the education and skills needed to achieve their goals.

Context:

The core purpose of the Minnesota State Academies is to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education to deaf and blind students. This purpose clearly aligns with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The first national mandate for special education services was passed in1975, which was approximately 117 years after the creation of the Academies at the end of the Civil War. From their inception in 1858 the Academies have provided special education services for deaf and blind students across the state and have been a resource for school districts and educational professionals.

MSA's primary customers are deaf and blind students who are enrolled at the Academies. Secondary customers included parents and school districts throughout the state that authorize students to attend the Academies. The city of Faribault is also a vested customer since the academies are an economic engine to the city.

Expectations on districts, schools, administrators, teachers, and students have increased dramatically in recent years. Changing expectations about the quality and nature of technology, mandated testing, and competitive compensation are examples of the significant areas that have impacted education and education costs across the state and nation.

The State Academies are funded primarily through a state general fund appropriation and through Asset Preservation funds during bonding years. Reimbursements from school districts, compensatory aid through the Department of Education, and private donations add to our revenue stream. Lastly, federal funds are dedicated to a variety of areas: examples include the child nutrition program, and the Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Process (CIMP) for special education.

Strategies:

1. **Provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to deaf and blind students.** The State Academies are expected to stay compliant with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). To meet this expectation, planning meetings are held for each student. These Individualized Education Program (IEP) Plan meetings bring parents, home school representatives, and MSA professional staff together for a single purpose - to develop a comprehensive, year-long educational plan for all students enrolled at the Academies. Additionally, educational staff members participate in professional development activities to keep licenses current and to stay abreast of changes in special education policy and procedure.

   The statewide objective to which the Academies contribute is: Minnesotans have the education and skills needed to achieve their goals. Our educational programming is premised on meeting the individual needs of students as they progress toward high school graduation. An essential component of this process is transition: education staff help students identify and achieve postsecondary goals. This task is part of the educational plan for every student age fourteen and above.

2. **Maintain and preserve existing facilities.** The Academies are sited on an aging campus that includes two buildings listed on the National Registry of Historical Places. A master plan was developed several years ago to identify the needs of the campus's facilities. The needs were prioritized and are reevaluated each year based on unanticipated changes to the master plan targets and available funds. Staff has been hired, trained, and assigned to preserve and maintain thirteen buildings on sixty acres of land. Some general fund appropriations are directed to asset preservation and ongoing maintenance.

Measuring Success:

Annual Review of all Individualized Education Program Plans (IEPs). This review typically includes the parent, home school district representative, and education staff. Progress on these plans is not easily quantified and does not provide group data for comparisons.

Enrollment Trends. Demographic data from 2002-2008 showed a slow but steady decline in the number of students enrolled in schools throughout the state. Since 2008, that trend has reversed with slow growth becoming the norm. Enrollments at the Academies have mirrored these trends with a substantial spike in enrollments for the 2012-2013 school year.

Lastly, the Academies are special education settings and like most alternative education settings find limited value in common measures of success like test scores and graduation rates. This is true because instruction is individualized and individual success is not easily converted to group data. Secondly, commonly used measures of success such as graduation rate and achievement lose impact because the number of students in any given evaluative group is seldom large enough to be statistically significant or establish trend data.

Measures of success that have meaning in settings like the Academies are "structurally based"; i.e., do these settings have organization components similar to those found in mainstream schools? Some of those components are:

- Appropriately licensed teachers and administrators
- Rigorous graduation requirements based on state standards
- Adherence to special education due process requirements
- Credible governance and oversight by knowledgeable agencies, boards, and professionals
- Accepted budgeting and accounting practices

The Minnesota State Academies have these components as part of their operational configuration.

State Academies
Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf
http://msad.state.mn.us

Statewide Outcome(s):

The Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf supports the following statewide outcome(s).

Minnesotans have the education and skills needed to achieve their goals.

Context:

The Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf must meet the federal mandate to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education for all deaf students enrolled in the school. One of the key challenges for the Academy is to remain compliant with the special education due process requirements which are defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Interpretations of that act are perpetually evolving based on guidance from federal offices, the Minnesota Department of Education, and case law.

The primary customers of the school are deaf students from across the state of Minnesota. Costs for educational services are primarily supported by a general fund appropriation, with some reimbursement from home school districts for specific types of expenditures. Other funding sources include compensatory aid through the Department of Education, private donations, and federal “flow through” funds. The Academy has no authority to conduct a levy referendum for operational or building costs.

Strategies:

The mission of the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf can be divided into three categories: academic achievement, socialization, and due process.

- **Academic Achievement.** Students from pre-school through 12th grade attend classes at the MSAD that meet state standards. The school year and the length of the instructional day meet statutory requirements. Students also participate in state mandated testing and are taught by licensed teachers who are skilled American Sign Language signers. The academic component of our mission is modified, to a degree, by the unique needs of the students. Those needs with accompanying services are identified in the Individual Educational Program Plan or IEP that is developed for each student with input from parents and the home school district.

- **Socialization.** Socialization is a major reason why parents and districts authorize deaf students to be placed at the Academy. Schools are social settings and deaf students at MSAD have a unique opportunity to interact with deaf peers throughout the day, a benefit that is difficult to replicate in home schools. Teachers provide direct and indirect social skills instruction in classes throughout the day.

- **Due Process.** The State Academy for the Deaf is expected to stay compliant with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This allows the education professionals to provide a Free, Appropriate Public Education to all the students. To meet this expectation, planning meetings are held for each student to develop Individual Education Program Plans (IEPs). These IEP meetings bring parents, home school representatives, and MSA professional staff together for a single purpose - to develop a comprehensive, year-long educational plan for all students enrolled at the Academies.

Results:

Demographic data from 2002-2008 showed a slow but steady decline in the number of students enrolled in schools throughout the state. Since 2008, that trend has reversed with slow growth becoming the norm. Enrollments at the Academies have mirrored these trends with a spike in enrollments for the 2012-2013 school year.

Measures of success are also formal approvals by independent evaluators. Both AdvanceED and the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD) gave the academic program full accreditation. Similarly, the MN Department of Education conducted a formal monitoring of our special education system and found the school compliant (highest assessment factor) in most areas.

Performance Measures	Previous	Current	Trend
1. AdvanceEd	Not Accredited	Full Accreditation	Improving
2. Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD)	Not Accredited	Full Accreditation	Improving
3. Student enrollments at MSAD	152	156	Increasing

Performance Measures Notes:

1. Previous Data: Prior to March 2010 / Current Data: After March 2010
2. Previous Data: Prior to April 2010 / Current Data: After April 2010
3. Previous Data: FY 2011 / Current Data: FY 2012

State Academies
State Academies - Minnesota State Academy for the Blind
http://msab.state.mn.us

Statewide Outcome(s):

The Minnesota State Academy for the Blind supports the following statewide outcome(s).

Minnesotans have the education and skills needed to achieve their goals.

Context:

The Minnesota State Academy for the Blind (MSAB) must meet the federal mandate to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education for all deaf students enrolled in the school. One of the key challenges for the Academy is to remain compliant with the special education due process requirements which are defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Interpretations of that act are perpetually evolving based on guidance from federal offices, the Minnesota Department of Education, and case law.

Costs for educational services are primarily supported by a general fund appropriation, with some reimbursement from home school districts for specific types of expenditures. Other funding sources include compensatory aid through the Department of Education, private donations, and federal funds. The Academy has no authority to conduct a levy referendum for any operational or building costs.

Strategies:

The mission of the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind can be divided into three categories: academic achievement, socialization, and due process.

- **Academic Achievement.** Students from pre-school through 12th grade attend classes at the MSAB that meet state standards. The school year and the length of the instructional day meet statutory requirements. Students also participate in state mandated testing and are taught by licensed teacher. The academic component of our mission is modified, to a degree, by the unique needs of the students. Those needs with accompanying services are identified in the Individual Educational Program Plan or IEP that is developed for each student with input from parents and the home school district.

- **Socialization.** Students who are multi-challenged (deaf/blind, low intellectual capacity, limited mobility, etc.) have socialization needs just like more capable students. MSAB provides that social experience which is difficult to replicate in a home school, and is a major reason why parents and districts authority blind students to be placed at the academy. Blind students at MSAB have a unique opportunity to interact with blind peers throughout the day. In addition, teachers provide direct and indirect social skills instruction in classes throughout the day.

- **Due Process.** The State Academy for the Blind is expected to stay compliant with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This allows education professionals to provide a Free, Appropriate Public Education to all the students. To meet this expectation, planning meetings are held for each student to develop Individual Education Program Plans (IEPs). These IEP meetings bring parents, home school representatives, and MSA professional staff together for a single purpose - to develop a comprehensive, year-long educational plan for all students enrolled at the Academies.

Results:

Demographic data from 2002-2008 showed a slow but steady decline in the number of students enrolled in schools throughout the state. Since 2008, that trend has reversed with slow growth becoming the norm. Enrollments at the Academies have mirrored these trends.

A primary measure of success is formal approval by independent evaluators. The academic component at MSAB was recently evaluated by AdvanceEd and the school was given “On Advisement” accreditation – one level below full accreditation. Similarly, the MN Department of Education conducted a formal monitoring of our special education system and found the school compliant (highest assessment factor) in most areas.

Performance Measures	Previous	Current	Trend
AdvanceED	Not Accredited	On Advisement	Improving
Enrollments MSAB	53	53	Stable

Performance Measures Notes:

1. Previous Data: Prior to March 2012 / Current Data: After March 2012
2. Previous Data: FY 2011 / Current Data FY 2012

State Academies
State Academies - Shared Services

http://www.msa.state.mn.us

Statewide Outcome(s):

Shared Services at the Minnesota State Academies supports the following statewide outcome(s).

Minnesotans have the education and skills needed to achieve their goals.

Context:

Shared Services at the Minnesota State Academies (MSA) involves the following units: central administration (superintendent), human resources, business services, physical plant, nursing, and dietary services. The purpose of these entities is to provide coordinated operational support two campuses: the Academy for the Blind and the Academy for the Deaf. The units provide specialized services and oversight to staff, students, buildings, and grounds. A general fund appropriation through the Governor's Office, asset preservation funds, and federal funds dedicated to the child nutrition program are the primary funding sources for Shared Services.

Strategies:

The Shared Services model at MSA has created an "economy of scale" to maximize work output in the most cost effective manner possible. Rather than two parallel systems, there is one to meet the demands of the Academies which are .5 mile apart. This coordinated strategy has placed staff in positions which reduce redundancy and focus efforts to economically meet long term, short term, and crisis needs. Key partners include multiple state offices, the Department of Education, and the Governor's Office.

Results:

Generally core functions continue to be performed in a timely and cost effective manner by Shared Services staff. Citations by monitoring agents have led to corrective action plans which have quickly been developed, approved, and implemented.

Performance Measures	Previous	Current	Trend
Invoices issued	~ 185	~ 185	Stable
Contracts generated	~ 120	~ 120	Stable

Performance Measures Notes:

The number of invoices issued and contracts generated have remained relatively constant over the years.