

Policy #: 607
Title: ORGANIZATION OF GRADE LEVELS
Date of Initial Approval: 02-18-2015
Revision/Re-authorization Dates: 06-27-2019; 09-20-2024
Reviewers: MSA Instructional Leadership Team

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to address the grade level organization at the Minnesota State Academies (MSA).

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. The policy of the school district is to address the groupings of grade levels as recognized in *Minn. Stat. § 120A.05*, as follows:

- *Elementary School*
 - *Grades prekindergarten through 6*
- *Middle School*
 - *Minimum of two consecutive grades above 4th but below 10th*
- *Secondary (Grades 7 through 12)*
 - *Middle School - Grades 7 through 8*
 - *Senior High - Grades 9 through 12*
 - *Vocational - Grades 9 through 12*

B. The superintendent may seek MSA board approval to administer certain programs on a non-graded basis or a design different than indicated above. Program proposals that seek MSA board approval must meet all state requirements and reflect the rationale for the modification.

C. At MSA, current programs are established as follows:

- a. Minnesota State Academy for the Blind
 - i. Multiple Challenges Program: Grouped by abilities/needs instead of grade level. (up to age 22)
 - ii. Academic Program:
 - 1. Elementary School: Kindergarten through 5th grade.
 - 2. Middle School: 6th-8th grade.
 - 3. High School: 9th-12th grade.
 - iii. Academy Plus (A+) Post-Secondary Program: Ages 18-22.
- b. Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf
 - i. Birth-36 months of age: Home-based services through Individual Family Service Plans.
 - ii. Early Childhood Education: 12 months through Kindergarten.
 - iii. Elementary School: 1st through 5th grade.
 - iv. Middle School: 6th-8th grade.
 - v. High School: 9th-12th grade.
 - vi. High School Life Skills Program: Grouped by abilities/needs instead of grade level. (Secondary students up to age 22)
 - vii. Academy Plus (A+) Post-Secondary Program: Ages 18-22.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Early Childhood" means a program designed for students between birth and 5 years of age, including pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes.
- B. "Pre-School" means a program designed for students younger than four years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year commences that prepares students to enter kindergarten during the following two school years.
- C. "Pre-Kindergarten" means a program designed for students younger than five years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year commences that prepares students to enter kindergarten the following school year.
- D. "Kindergarten" means a program designed for students five years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year commences that prepares students to enter first grade the following school year.
- E. "Multiple Challenges Program" is a program on the MSAB campus that is designed for blind/visually impaired students who also have additional mental, learning, physical, and/or other disabilities. Decisions about educational programming and academic goals are determined by the student's IEP team. Students in this program usually remain in the program until they age out or when the IEP team determines when they are ready to transition into an adult program.
- F. "Life Skills Program" is a program on the MSAD campus that is designed for secondary deaf/hard-of-hearing students through age 22 who also have additional mental, learning, physical, and/or other disabilities that require a hands-on experiential approach to learning. Decisions about educational programming and academic goals are determined by the student's IEP team. Students in this program usually remain in the program until they age out or when the IEP team determines when they are ready to transition into an adult program.
- G. "Academy Plus (A+) Program" means programs on both campuses that are designed to support transition and independent living needs of students who have met high school graduation requirements but require additional supports and training to be able to transition into post-secondary programs, training, work, and/or living situations.

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. § 120A.05, Subds. 9, 10a, 11, 13, 17 (Public Schools)

Minn. Stat. § 123B.02, Subd. 2 (General Powers of Independent School Districts)