



# Grading Handbook

## 2022-23

MSA's mission is to provide accelerated and inclusive curricula and instruction in all subjects, with an emphasis on math and science. This handbook is designed to guide MSA staff grading procedures that are consistent with the MSA mission. In addition, the grading handbook will inform parents and students of MSA's grading procedures. The information in MSA's grading handbook has been approved by the MSA staff. Teachers and administrators will support the procedures and guidelines detailed in this handbook.

<b>Academic Grades</b>	Pg. 2-4
<b>Grade Point Average (GPA) Information</b>	Pg. 5-6
<b>Credits and Earned Credits</b>	Pg. 7
<b>Failing a Course</b>	Pg. 8-9
<b>Student Transcripts</b>	Pg. 10-11
<b>High School Credits Earned in Middle School</b>	Pg. 12
<b>Student Grade Reports</b>	Pg. 13
<b>Recognizing Student Achievement</b>	Pg. 14
<b>Credit Recovery</b>	Pg. 15

# Academic Grades

All students at MSA must earn at least a D- or better in each of the required courses. 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; the student must repeat the course in order to fulfill the 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 apply 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**

### Middle School Students

Parents/guardians of middle school students will contact the Middle School Assistant Director when requesting a withdrawal from an enrichment course in the first ten days of the school year.

### High School Students

High school students will contact the High School Counselor to request a withdrawal from the course. The decision may also include the High School Assistant Director.

<b>Withdrawing from a semester or year-long class</b>		
<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"><li>• No letter grade</li><li>• No list of course on transcript</li></ul>
Beyond day 10	Student is withdrawn from the class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Letter mark is W</li></ul>

No drops will be granted after the 10<sup>th</sup> day of semester 1 or semester 2. Each day of school counts as one day, not including weekends or no school days.

## **Repeat Course: R**

Any student who fails a course or does 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. The highest grade earned will be listed on the transcript.
3. The course with the lower grade will be issued an R for repeat. No credit will be given for courses labeled as a repeat.

4. The teacher or counselor should see that the Repeat Course new grade be updated on the student's transcript.
5. PSEO courses are not eligible.

### **Recording Grades**

Skyward Family Access is the location where 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 student or 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 Executive 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 the student to high school. The high school GPA can be 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
		<b>3.000</b> total	<b>9.830</b> 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 with 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
- 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

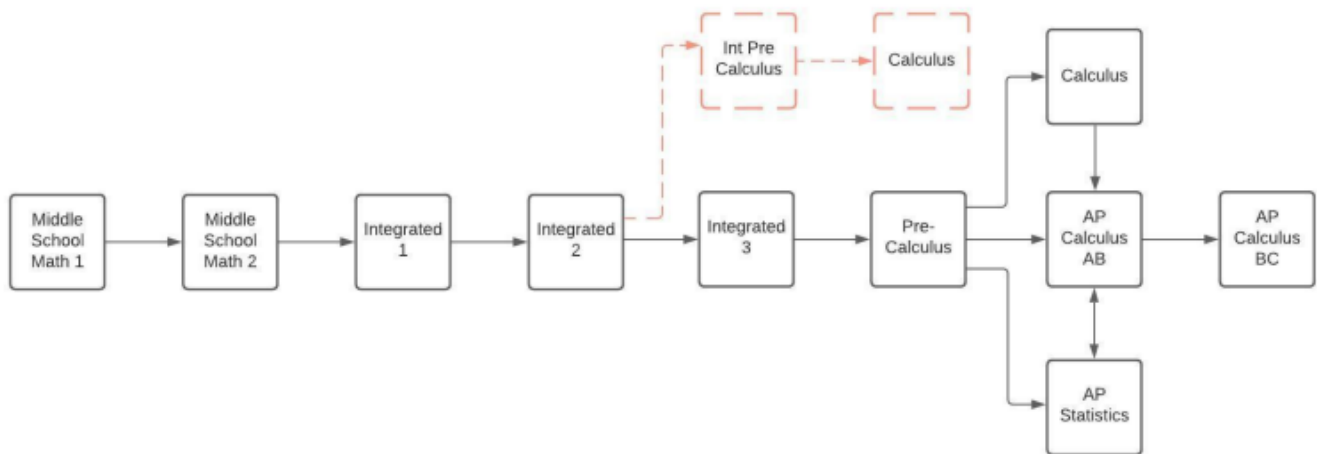
## Notification of Retaking a Course

When a student is doing poorly in a class, teachers will work with students and families to improve the situation. In the event a high school student still fails a course, the student and parents will be notified to repeat the course or engage in credit recovery.

## Math Criteria for Graduation

Students are not allowed to skip a class. Follow the flowchart below for the math progression.

### Math Flowchart



## Spanish Criteria for Graduation

Students are not allowed to skip a class. Follow the Spanish flowchart below for the Spanish progression. Students who enroll at MSA after 8<sup>th</sup> grade must pass every Spanish course through grade 12.



## Spanish Flowchart

**Students who start at MSA in 6<sup>th</sup> Grade:**



**Students who start at MSA in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade:**



**Students who start at MSA in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade with no Spanish experience:**



**Students who start at MSA in 9<sup>th</sup> Grade with no Spanish experience:**



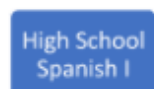
**Students who start at MSA in 10<sup>th</sup> Grade with no Spanish experience:**



**Students who start at MSA in 11<sup>th</sup> Grade with no Spanish experience:**



**Students who start at MSA in 12<sup>th</sup> Grade with no Spanish experience:**



# Student Transcripts and Modified Pass/Fail Gradebook

## 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).

## Medical Absences Modified Pass/Fail Gradebook Directions

There are two rare ways in which a student may obtain a modified gradebook due to medical issues and absences; however, both ways require an 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 is not always required.

- 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 pass/fail grading makes sense for the student.
- 2) Team Initiated: Attendance data is reviewed at monthly grade level meetings. A member of the MSA team will be in touch with parents and students when attendance is a concern. 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 set up a meeting between parents/guardians, teachers, and administration. They can then discuss the issues and determine an intervention plan, and if pass/fail grading makes sense for the student.

### Students who change classes after the 10th day of class

- If a teacher recommends a class change for the student after day 10 but before the beginning of semester two, the student will not automatically receive pass/fail grading but it may make sense in certain circumstances. This determination will be made by a team of the parents, teacher, and administration.
- Student/parent requests for a class change after the first 10 school days of either semester 1 or semester 2, the student could receive pass/fail grading because they missed a significant portion of

the curriculum. The parents, student, administrators, and counselor are involved in decision-making.

- Teacher recommendation for a student to move down a level in the class will receive a W for the class they were withdrawn from and may receive pass/fail grading for their new class for the semester. The parents, student, administrators, and counselor are involved in decision-making.
- For students switching classes at the semester end – the student would receive the letter grade they received at the semester and then may have pass/fail grading for semester 2. The parents, student, administrators and counselor are involved in decision-making.

#### Policy 503 - Excused Absences

If a student misses more than 25% of the curriculum, a team meeting may be triggered to discuss the application if the student's attendance is 90% or less regardless if the absences are excused or unexcused. A team of the parents, student, administrator, and counselor will determine if pass/fail grading is warranted.

#### Explanation for Differences in Attendance Criteria

90% or missing more than 20 days (This based on a state requirement);

15 days for unenrolled status (This is based on a state requirement);

10 days for transfer students (This matches our withdrawal policies and the reason is optional).

# 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 eighth-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.

## **Integrated Math III or higher**

Students who take Integrated Math 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 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 Grade 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 emailed, and hard copy will be 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 sent to the MSA community. The following is the Honor Roll criteria along with a total of at least four MSA credits per semester:

GPA	Honor Roll
4.000	Distinguished Honor Roll
3.999-3.450	High Honor Roll
3.449-2.950	Honor Roll

## Presidential Awards for 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> 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.

# Credit Recovery Options and Procedures

Students who enroll at MSA in any grade should refer to the Academic Expectations and Guide to Success at MSA for each grade. Academic Expectations are located on the MSA website under the Current Families tab/Handbooks and Guides. Our guidance counselors will assist students and families in selecting the most appropriate option.

## Course Credit Recovery 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 demonstrate understanding and develop skills 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 progression to the next course or impedes the student's expected graduation date at MSA.***

### 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 summer course at MSA, through another district or online option. This option should only be used if the equivalent course is offered and only when the failed course impedes the student's progression to the next course or 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 Integrated Math II in 9th grade at MSA can attend a summer school course in the home district which is equivalent to Integrated Math II. After confirmed successful completion of the summer course, the student may enter 10th grade in Integrated Math 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.

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.

MSA must receive a transcript or official completion grade from the school or district 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).