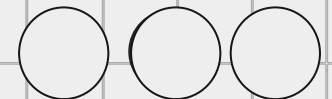
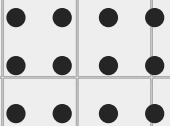
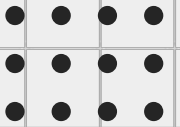




MSA Elementary Townhall

October 9, 2025



Agenda

1. Mission, Vision, and Values
2. Teaching and Learning
3. School Culture
4. Next Steps
5. Q & A



MSA Mission\Uision\Ualues

Vision

To be an innovative, sustainable model of academic excellence for all students that creates well-rounded, lifelong learners and global citizens.

Mission

We provide accelerated and inclusive curricula and instruction in all subjects, with an emphasis on math and science.

Values

- **Honesty:** MSA's community exhibits fairness, cooperation, integrity, and honesty. MSA students and staff take responsibility for their actions.
- **Community:** MSA maintains small class sizes and a small school feel.
- **Respect:** MSA's community respects others and their views, while fostering a safe environment where every voice is heard, and individuals are free to take risks.
- **Teamwork:** MSA encourages networking, collaboration, and open communication between all members of our community. MSA encourages students, their families, and staff to invest their time and resources to serve the MSA community.
- **Excellence:** MSA continuously evaluates and improves programs to ensure the highest quality in teaching and learning. MSA empowers students to develop independence through organization, time management, and self-discipline.

Focus on Equity

MSA celebrates diversity and welcomes all students. Staff are expected to embrace equity and adhere to our equity policies

- Policy 102 – Equal Educational Opportunity
- Policy 102.1 – Racial Equity and Inclusion
- Policy 102.2 – Gender Diverse, Nonbinary, Transgender, and Sexual Orientation Equity
- Policy 102.3 – Disability Rights, Inclusion, and Access

MATH AND SCIENCE ACADEMY 4-WAY EQUITY TEST

The Math and Science Academy School Board uses the 4-Way Equity Test to guide its decision-making process.



1

Does this help to provide opportunities for students who have historically been underserved, underrepresented, or disadvantaged by the current system?

2

Does this help to ensure equitable access for all?

3

Does this help to eliminate barriers based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, or other protected groups?

4

Does this ensure the same rigorous standards for academic performance exist for all students?

How Do We Measure Success?

Theme 1: The Group	Theme 2: The Individual	Theme 3: Academic Excellence	Theme 4: Well-Rounded Programming
<i>We ensure the group is safe, joyful, and productive</i>	<i>We honor and support each learner's unique journey.</i>	<i>We pursue the highest standards in teaching and learning.</i>	<i>We nurture the whole child through diverse, balanced opportunities.</i>
MSAs community exhibits fairness, cooperation, integrity, and honesty (Values)	For all students (Vision) Welcomes all students (Focus on Equity)	To be an innovative, sustainable model of academic excellence for all students. (Vision Statement)	Creates well-rounded, lifelong learners and global citizens. (Vision Statement)
MSA encourages networking, collaboration, and open communication between all members of our community. (Values)	MSA's community respects others and their views, while fostering a safe environment where every voice is heard, and individuals are free to take risks. (Values)	MSA continuously evaluates and improves programs to ensure the highest quality in teaching and learning (Mission Statement)	MSA celebrates diversity. (Equity Commitment) Informed by diverse cultural perspectives. (Focus Group Feedback)
MSA maintains small class sizes and a small school feel. (Values)	MSA empowers students to develop independence through organization, time management, and self-discipline. (Values)	Learning goals aligned with lesson plans (state standards) - learning products that indicate goals are met. (Focus Group Feedback)	Music and Arts programs. (Focus Group Feedback)
Model a respectful community that honors diversity and self-advocacy in students. (Focus Group Feedback)	Supporting students at all levels with individualizing learning. (Focus Group Feedback)	STEM/robotics - (Focus Group Feedback)	Socio-Emotional Learning. (Focus Group Feedback) Learning and Character Development (Focus Group Feedback)
Strong Parent/Teacher communication and collaboration. (Focus Group Feedback)	Differentiation - identifying skill gaps and giving students necessary foundational skills. (Focus Group Feedback)	Project-Based Learning/Learning by doing - kids take ownership and report on their own learning. (Focus Group Feedback)	Specialists, especially for languages (Focus Group Feedback)
	Safety for ALL, logistics/moving about campus. (Focus Group Feedback)	Opportunities for accelerated learning and more support when needed. (Focus Group Feedback)	Real world applications (Focus Group Feedback)

-Mission

-Vision

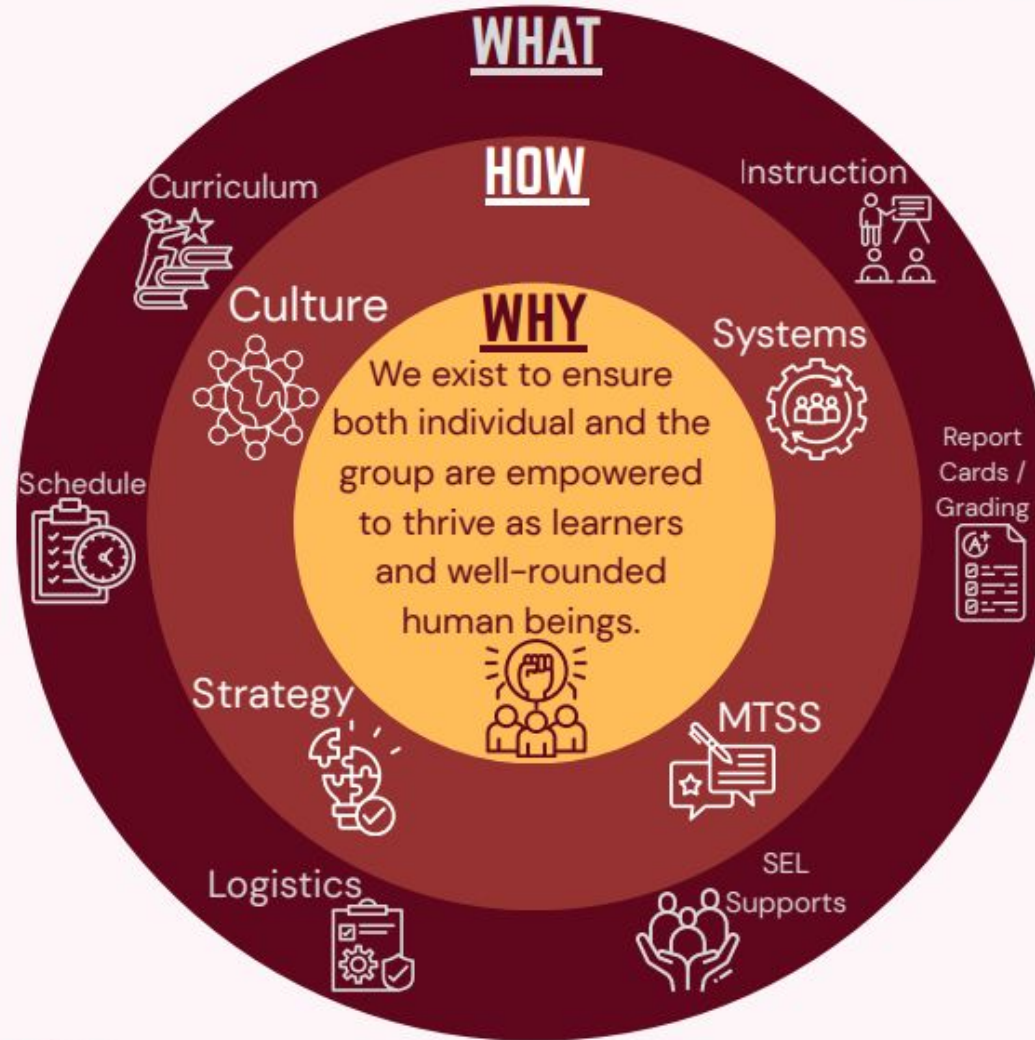
-Values

-Focus on Equity

-FY25 Focus Group Feedback

MSA Elementary Theory of Action

ELEMENTARY GOLDEN CIRCLE



Teaching and Learning



Instructional Floor



- **Efficacy** – We believe all students can succeed and we believe in our collective ability to help them do so.
- **Culturally Responsive** – We make students feel seen, valued, and challenged through culturally responsive teaching.
- **Data-Driven** – We collect meaningful data daily and use it to intervene and accelerate.
- **Standards-Based** – We teach the curriculum to fidelity until we master it – then we open the door to greater innovation and autonomy.
- **Actively Engaged** – We design our day around students *doing*. From problem solving to collaborating, students work hard and own their learning.
- **Well-Managed** – Our classrooms are well-managed, highly-productive, and safe.

Specialization + Strategic Scheduling

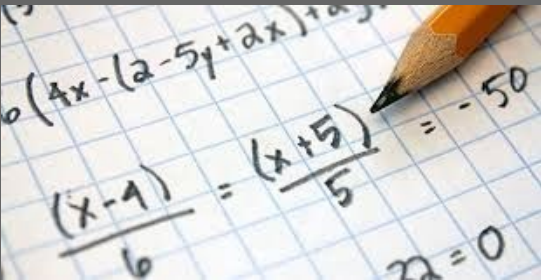
Specialization is when a teacher has a home-room but also has a speciality content they teach twice (eg – 5th grade math teacher and 5th grade science teacher)

<u>K-1</u>	<u>2-3</u>	<u>4-5</u>
No specialization. Younger students are best served by one teacher for all content so they can build proper attachment	Each teacher is with their own class in the morning for homeroom & all literacy instruction. The afternoon is a specialized model with 1 math teacher and 1 science teacher	Specialized model. Each teacher has their own homeroom with one grade level literacy teacher and one grade level STEM teacher. The literacy block and the STEM block will be 90-120 minutes total.

Strategic Scheduling is when the building schedule is designed to maximize adult supports and data-driven special grouping.

- *Example* – Grade bands have literacy stations at different times so the interventionist and ML teacher can pull small groups for all grades
- *Example* – 4th and 5th grade have intervention time at the same time so students with similar strengths and needs can be flexibly group across classrooms and grades.

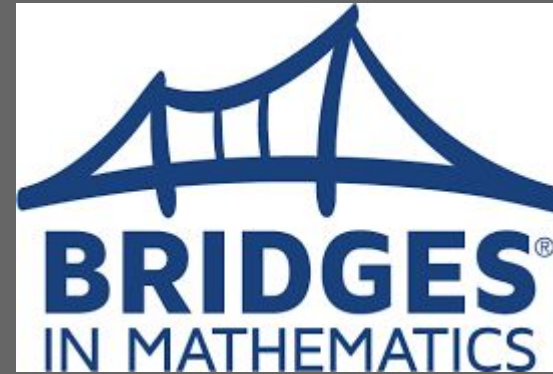
Math Curriculum



- The 2022 MN Math standards will begin being assessed in 2027/2028. Our math curriculum will align to these updated standards.

<u>Step 1</u>	<u>Step 2</u>	<u>Step 3</u>
Feedback from MDE, COMPASS, and focus groups consolidated, 9 criteria were identified as important look-fors • Conceptual Understanding • Procedural Fluency • Application • Acceleration Supports • Intervention Supports • Alignment to the 2022 Math Standards • Hands-On/Low Tech • Professional Development Support • Teacher Friendly 5 Curriculum we identified for review – Bridges, Eureka, Illustrative, Everyday, iReady Classroom Math	Vendor meetings were held. Each curriculum was vetted against the 9 identified criteria. • iReady was eliminated because it was too technology-driven • Everyday was eliminated because it lacked the conceptual depth we are looking for • Illustrative was eliminated because it lacks sufficient intervention and acceleration components Bridges and Eureka were identified as the top choices.	An AI curriculum review model was designed based upon the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) master text Principles to Action. 1. Establish Mathematical Goals to Focus Learning 2. Implement Tasks That Promote Reasoning and Problem Solving 3. Use and Connect Mathematical Representations 4. Facilitate Meaningful Mathematical Discourse 5. Pose Purposeful Questions 6. Build Procedural Fluency from Conceptual Understanding 7. Support Productive Struggle in Learning Mathematics 8. Elicit and Use Evidence of Student Thinking Curriculum access was provided and vetted. Documents were uploaded into the AI model. Bridges was ranked superior in 7 of 8 criteria.

Bridges Math



- It is highly conceptual and designed as follows:
 - 20 minute daily Number Corner.
 - 60 Minute core lesson which includes Problems and Investigations, student Math Forums for talking about solutions and strategies, Number Strings for practicing mental math, and stations.
 - Supplemental, small-group intervention component organized by content, not grade level. Most robust intervention approach I have found.
 - Concept Quests (can take place during station time) – Open-ended problems called Excursions and Adventures that provide enrichment and extension opportunities. Very compelling and unique feature for acceleration.
- Bridges does require more robust professional development because it is highly reliant on teacher skill but this is a good thing – we want to develop our teachers into genuine experts.
- Many high-achieving Minnesota Districts have adopted Bridges

Literacy Curriculum



The process of identifying a literacy curriculum is more straightforward. As part of the Minnesota READ Act, the state vetted a vast number of curriculum for alignment to the Science of Reading. Very few curricula passed this process.

EL Education - The only comprehensive K-5 curriculum (*offer **all components of structured literacy and language comprehension** within a single, integrated program - foundational + knowledge-building*) to pass the review process.

- Student-centered with a focus on knowledge, high-quality work, and character
- Trade book-driven modules with science/social studies themes & social justice projects
- Structured 2-hour daily block:
 - K-2: 60-min foundational Skills Block + 60-min content-based Module Block
 - 3-5: 60-min All Block (grammar, mechanics, reading) + 60-min Module Block
- Emphasizes depth over breadth: 9-week modules include background, writing, and project application
- Strong multilingual and differentiation supports built into every lesson
- Formative & summative assessments built into every unit (K-5)
- Robust family letters, community integration ideas, and optional digital platform
- Extensive PD options available (launch, module unpacking, coaching, leadership planning)

Science Curriculum

Amplify Science – EdReports lists only six K–5 science curriculum that have completed the review process and Amplify Science is the only curriculum certified GREEN in both *alignment* and *useability* requirements.

- Designed in conjunction with UC–Berkeley and aligned to NGSS. The curriculum is phenomenon–based and students read about a phenomenon and spend the unit exploring the phenomenon through video, discussion, reading, small group discussions, and investigations.
- K–2 has three modules and 3–5 has four modules. The modules focus on claims, evidence, and reasoning. Lessons are 45 minutes per day but there is flexibility. Heavy literacy focus.
- Each unit has a kit and each kit has a science notebook and a series of science readers. Some units have investigations and digital simulations. Precreated slides are available to teachers for all units.
- 3–6 hours launch session is available to walk through materials and plans. Additional PD options can also be requested.

Project Lead the Way – Though not yet reviewed by EdReports, PLTW is widely known as a high–quality, NGSS–aligned approach for building a culture of scientific thinking and hands–on exploration through integrated science and engineering experiences. In considering the culture of inquiry and exploration we would like to foster, PLTW is a strong match.

- The K–5 program is called Launch and it is designed with flexibility in mind. It can be used as a comprehensive science program or supplementary.
- 42 modules exist with 4–8 modules per grade. Each module takes between 10 and 15 hours.
- Each module starts with a story and the story articulates a problem to be solved that drives the remainder of the module.
- Student engagement is driven by a more open, project–based learning approach. Extensive building and actual experimentation is present.
- 16 hours of professional development is required for teachers before starting to use PLTW. An affordable train–the–trainer model is available in subsequent years.
- Inexpensive licensing model but professional development and materials costs are more substantial. 2–year grant funding exists to support licensing and PD but not materials.

Science Curriculum



An AI curriculum review model was designed based upon the based on [A Framework for K-12 Science Education](#)

1. Engagement in Practices
2. Hands-On, Inquiry-Driven Investigation
3. Engineering Integration
4. Coherence Across Grades
5. Crosscutting Concepts Use
6. Focus on Sensemaking Over Recall
7. Evidence-Based Reasoning & Communication
8. Equity and Access

The review model scored a 4-4 tie.

Ultimately, Project Lead the Way is our choice because of the hands-on, open-ended nature of the scientific experience our students will have. In PLTW, students actually **do science** instead of just reading about it.

School Culture



We are building a school where...

- **Kids groan, “Do we *have* to go?” when it’s time to clean up and head home**—not because they don’t love home, but because the learning here is so joyful, meaningful, and engaging that it outshines even “tablet time.”
- **Deep thinking is the norm, not the exception.** Every student is expected and empowered to grapple, stretch, and grow their minds.
- **Failure is reframed as fuel for learning.** Here, kids learn not just to get back up, but to do so with purpose and confidence. They become resilient learners who understand that struggle is part of the journey.
- **Every child is known, connected, safe, and loved.** Relationships form the bedrock of everything we do—students never feel invisible, and adults never forget the power of presence.
- **Teachers rediscover the joy of teaching.** They are supported, inspired, and given the space to innovate, connect, and grow alongside their students.
- **Our village—families, staff, and community—walks shoulder-to-shoulder** toward one shared goal: doing what is best for all students, without exception.

Culture Starts with Us



We are a team – It is always ***"us vs. the problem"*** and never ***"you vs. me"***

We will center every decision on students' learning, well-being, and developmental needs.

We will embrace a culture of continuous improvement. We will make mistakes and we will learn from them.

The Professionalism Floor

Sincerity	Reliability	Competence	Care
 Sincerity: We say what we mean—with honesty and care. • We communicate in ways that are clear, honest, and rooted in integrity. • We speak truthfully—even when it's hard—but always with respect. • We don't say one thing publicly and another privately. • We give feedback directly, not through gossip or triangulation. • We own our thoughts and intentions—we don't manipulate or posture.  Non-negotiable: We do not gossip, undermine others, or say things behind people's backs that we wouldn't say to their face.	 Reliability: We follow through on what we say we'll do. • We do what we say, when we say we will—or communicate proactively when we can't. • We show up on time—physically and mentally—for meetings, duties, and responsibilities. • We meet deadlines or communicate early when we need help. • We hold ourselves accountable before others have to.  Non-negotiable: We do not leave others hanging, delay commitments without communication, or expect reminders to do our jobs.	 Competence: We commit to doing our work well—and growing where needed. • We bring care and professionalism to our work, and we seek growth when we fall short. • We deliver instruction and support that meets the standard our students deserve. • We ask for help or training when something is new or hard. • We reflect on feedback and use it to improve—not to defend or deflect.  Non-negotiable: We do not disengage from our own learning or settle for 'good enough' when it comes to serving kids.	 Care: We act in ways that show we are for each other. • We show up for students and for one another with empathy, respect, and team-mindedness. • We assume best intentions and seek understanding before judgment. • We support our teammates during hard moments. • We protect each other's dignity—even when we disagree.  Non-negotiable: We do not demean, dismiss, isolate, or intentionally harm a teammate—whether through words, tone, or behavior.

Well-Rounded Programming

Social-Emotional Learning – Success in life is based not only on how much a person knows, but also on how well a person navigates challenges, manages relationships, and nurtures their executive function skills. We will be providing a Social-Emotional Learning curriculum to support the development of these qualities.

Restorative Practices – Every day will start with a community building circle to provide students the opportunity to connect with one another and build relationships. We will also invite students to the table to solve problems and address conflict when they emerge.

Specialists – Every student has their own unique interests and geniuses. Our goal is to provide opportunities for students to explore their geniuses through well-rounded specialists programming including Art, Music, Physical Education, Spanish, and STEM.

STEM-Based Environment



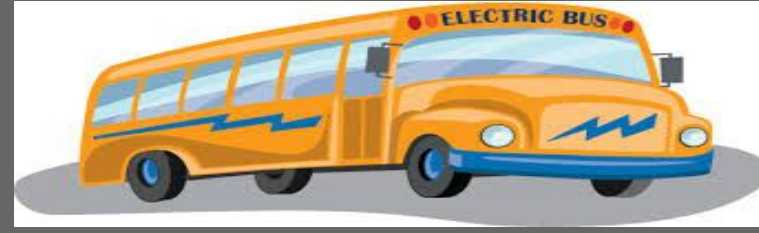
Over the coming years, we are eager to design an innovative STEM-based environment.

- STEM Hallways
- STEM Playground

We have explored initial conversations with the Science Museum of Minnesota and they are eager to support our design efforts.

The speed and depth of our design plans will be funding-dependent. If you know of any group that might be interested in supporting these projects, please let me know!

Miscellaneous



1. If you live within the boundaries of district 833, please consider busing your children.
2. We will have an on-site breakfast and lunch program
3. Homework expectations will be differentiated by grade and will be based on research-based best practices – more to come!
4. We will have programming to support special education students, multilingual students, and gifted/talented students. Programming is currently in development and details will be shared in the coming months.
5. Before and after care programming is in development and will be shared in the coming months.

WHAT'S
NEXT?



Next Steps

1. Our authorizer has approved our elementary expansion! They submitted our expansion to MDE by the October 1 deadline and are awaiting formal MDE approval. This will likely come within the next month but may not come until December. We will keep you posted.
2. We are awaiting guidance on when we can open our formal application process.
3. We will be holding curriculum sessions on October 16 and 17. If you would like to attend one of the sessions, please sign up
4. We will be establishing several parent task forces to provide insights into SEL programming and Accelerated Programming. If you are interested in supporting either task force, please sign up and more information will be shared soon.
5. The enrollment lottery will take place in February. You will be entered into the lottery based on your application. The lottery process is guided by Minnesota State Statute and is random. Siblings of accepted students and children of staff do get priority in the lottery.
6. We will hold a series of parent engagement events for enrolled families beginning in February/March. More information will be communicated about these events after the lottery.
7. Remodel of Building A and B will begin in early June. Volunteer opportunities will be available to support building readiness tasks.

October 16 and 17

Bridges In Mathematics – October 16 from 10–11

EL Education Literacy – October 16 from 1–2

Desired Daily Experience Focus Group – October 17 from 10–11

Project Lead the Way Science – October 17 from 1–2

Parent Task Forces

Parent task forces are designed to engage families as thought partners in shaping key components of our new school programs. These groups will provide structured input that reflects family experiences, perspectives, and priorities. Task force recommendations will be considered carefully as part of the decision-making process. Final decisions remain the responsibility of school leadership.

Structure & Process – Each task force will meet **three times**. Sessions are designed to balance open listening with structured review and collaborative input.

Session 1 – Listening & Visioning (Focus Group)

- Families share their experiences, hopes, and concerns related to the program area (e.g., Social-Emotional Learning, Gifted/Talented).

Session 2 – Exploring Options

- School leader presents vetted program options informed by family input from Session 1.
- Families receive a decision-making rubric outlining evaluation criteria (e.g., alignment to student needs, equity, evidence-base, feasibility).

Session 3 – Recommendations

- Task force members use the rubric to rate and rank options.
- The group works toward consensus on a set of prioritized recommendations.
- Recommendations are documented and submitted to school leadership for consideration.

Task Force Options

- **SEL Programming**
- **GT/Acceleration Programming**

Parent Engagement Sign-Up



Additional questions can be sent to jtiarks@mnmsa.org

ANY
QUESTIONS?

