

## Table of Contents

### Minnesota State Academies

|                                        |   |
|----------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Agency Profile</i> .....            | 1 |
| <b><u>Program</u></b> .....            | 5 |
| <b>Minnesota State Academies</b> ..... | 5 |
| <b><u>Activity</u></b> .....           | 5 |
| <b>Academy for the Deaf</b> .....      | 5 |
| <i>Activity Narrative</i> .....        | 5 |
| <b>Academy for the Blind</b> .....     | 7 |
| <i>Activity Narrative</i> .....        | 7 |
| <b>Academy Operations</b> .....        | 9 |
| <i>Activity Narrative</i> .....        | 9 |

<https://www.msa.state.mn.us>

### AT A GLANCE

- The Minnesota State Academies oversees two schools - the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind (MSAB), and the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (MSAD) on 2 campuses in Faribault, Minnesota.
- The Academies have provided educational services to blind/visually impaired (B/VI), deafblind (DB), and deaf/hard-of-hearing (D/HH) students since the 1860s. Many of our students also have additional disabilities and learning/communication needs.
- The Academies are a public school district, utilizing the same educational standards and expectations as other districts in the state. All of our students are special education students on Individual Education Plans.
- Students from over 60 different school districts attend classes at the Academies.
- The Academies are funded primarily through a biennial appropriation rather than by the funding formula that is applied to other districts in the state. The Academies are not able to issue any tax levies or bonding and rely on legislative action to fund all needs on our campuses.

### PURPOSE

The Minnesota State Academies contribute to the goals for education of providing a world class education, safe and nurturing environment, and caring and qualified teachers. Our school programs incorporate fully accessible and specially designed instructional services to our state's deaf, hard-of-hearing, deafblind, blind, and visually impaired students. We provide educational programming that ensures their full access to academics, language, social development, and mental health. Our mission is: "Minnesota State Academies empowers every student to achieve, care, and thrive in an ever-changing world." In our efforts to prepare students, we provide educational programming to support students in their development of knowledge, critical thinking, and skills necessary to become contributing members of Minnesota's economy, promoting transition skills to support successful employment, and independence after graduation.

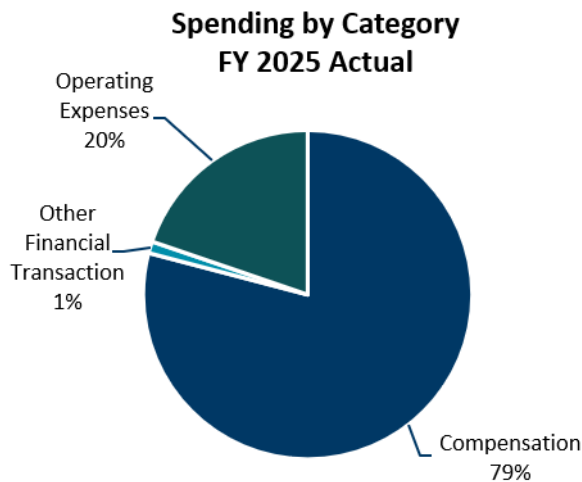
Each student is provided with opportunities to maximize their education and skills so that they can reach their transition goals, in conjunction with their Individual Education Plans. Our students range in age from infants who participate in Early Childhood services through 22-year-old students who are working to meet graduation requirements and Individual Education Plan expectations beyond the usual four years of high school. During most years, we have approximately 135-145 students. Our numbers have recently declined somewhat due to the COVID-19 pandemic, similar to the experiences of many school districts in Minnesota. However, we have begun to see an uptick in enrollments and anticipate returning to our usual enrollment numbers within the next year or two.

In our educational programming, we incorporate instruction and training for families in supporting communication access and educational growth for their B/VI, DB, or D/HH child – this contributes to strong family connections and support for their child, and we are working to expand our services to support communities around the state. As a part of our legal obligations to be a resource to school districts, we also serve school districts statewide, providing support in staff training, assessments for students, and certain support services that are required by students' Individual Education Plans.

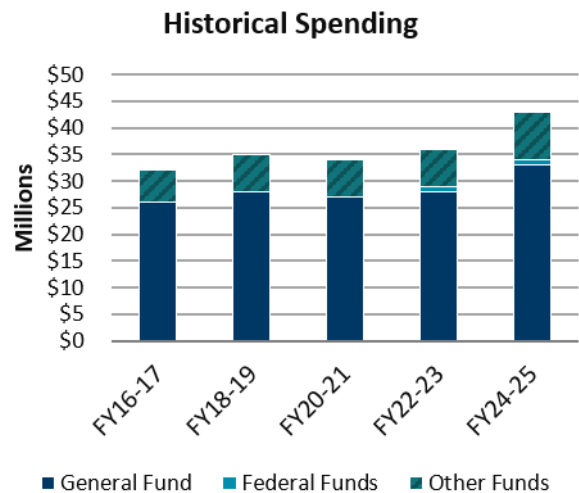
While D/HH or B/VI students are the majority of our enrollment, Minnesota State Academies also serves students who are both deaf and blind (DB), and many also have significant physical or cognitive disabilities. School districts usually have very few students with those disabilities and have collaborated with Minnesota State Academies to

provide the best available and least restrictive educational environment because 1) the needs of the students are met fully; 2) it is more efficient to enroll a student at Minnesota State Academies in an established program that is designed to meet their needs and has a larger critical mass of peers/students rather than trying to develop a minimally effective program for a small number of students with limited services and a much smaller critical mass; and 3) our staff members are highly trained in instructional methodology that matches the needs of our students – they are able to design effective and accessible lessons, using student-centered methods and appropriate technology/strategies, including full and direct communication in the students’ most accessible language/mode of learning.

## BUDGET



*Source: Budget Planning & Analysis System (BPAS)*



*Source: Consolidated Fund Statement*

The annual operating budget for FY25 to the Minnesota State Academies is approximately 17.2 million dollars. Nearly all operating funds used by MSA are appropriated by the legislature (direct appropriations and/or reimbursed costs) as MSA does not have alternate sources of revenue. MSA also receives capital appropriations (not included in the chart above) to maintain buildings on two campuses, two of which are on the National Registry of Historic Places. The percentage of our operating budget reserved for compensation has increased over the past few years due to salary increases and other financial incentives approved within bargaining contracts.

## STRATEGIES

- Rather than serving one geographical location, the Academies serve B/VI, DB, and D/HH students from the entire state. The Academies provide a fully accessible educational environment that is designed specifically to meet their needs, serving as an additional option for districts which have very few deaf or blind students in their schools. Rather than hiring special education teachers and purchasing needed support services and equipment, especially with the limited number of qualified individuals available for those positions/services, the districts have the ability (with parental agreement) to send a student to the Academies with no tuition costs.
- The mission of the Academies is to empower students to achieve, care, and thrive in an ever-changing world. We meet the challenges of a student population with varied communication and learning needs through using state standards, Individual Education Programs (IEP), transition planning, and incorporation of research-based best practices for instruction of B/VI, DB, and D/HH individuals. We incorporate instruction in Braille, Orientation and Mobility, American Sign Language/English bilingual strategies, speech & language services, among others in ensuring that each of our students’ needs are

met both in the classroom and outside the classroom. We focus on the development of each child as a whole, enhancing opportunities for further success in life.

- The role of the Academies is to provide a comprehensive and appropriately designed educational program for our student population. We have a responsibility and obligation to provide top-quality education programming in an efficient and accountable way. Our teachers prepare lessons and instructional units to ensure that our students work towards achievement of Minnesota state standards and IEP goals established by their IEP teams. We provide professional development/learning opportunities for our teachers to maintain their knowledge and skills, ensuring that we continue to utilize research-based methodology and best practices for teaching blind and deaf students, including any additional needs that they may have. Outside of the classroom, we provide enrichment and extracurricular opportunities so that students can develop fully as a whole child (meeting their mental health, social, physical, and communication needs).
- In alignment with the expectations established by Minnesota's Olmstead Plan, our school supports students with coursework, experiential activities, work readiness, and independent living skills that support their ability to have an independent life after graduation that allows for them to choose a variety of occupations, living situations, and recreational/social opportunities. The Olmstead Plan is defined as a broad series of key activities our state must accomplish to ensure people with disabilities are living, learning, working, and enjoying life in the most integrated setting. This enhances their ability to be contributing neighbors and employees in Minnesota. We collaborate with other state agencies and school districts to provide a variety of transition programming.
- The Academies' special education program is involved in a continuous review cycle developed and overseen by the Minnesota Department of Education to ensure that we follow established processes and procedures to develop individual education plans and evaluations following the needs of each student. Our special education professionals have specific training and knowledge related to evaluations, teaching, and designing educational programming that matches our student population.
- Our Early Childhood services include instruction for students, starting as soon as the child is identified as B/VI, DB, or D/HH. We provide home-based services, supporting students and their families with communication, language, and learning access at home until the child becomes 2 years of age. At that time, parents have the option of enrolling their children in our site-based early childhood classes for part-day/full-day instruction designed to maximize the students' learning and language opportunities. This supports the family structure and encourages continued communication and learning at home, outside of the classroom, which enhances further learning and academic success of the child.
- Lastly, we issue diplomas to students who have met the requirements for graduation, including special education goals. While working towards earning a diploma, each student receives individually designed educational programming, accommodations, and services to support his/her growth towards achieving transition goals established in their Individual Education Program.

## RESULTS

### Part A: Performance Data

| Measure                               | Measure type               | Measure data source                             | Historical trend                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Most recent data                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kindergarten Readiness                | IEP/IFSP assessments       | IEP/IFSP data collection                        | We transitioned to a new assessment this year using the GOLD assessment - 100% of our students were assessed using this tool and IFSP/IEP goals were developed from this assessment.                                                               | 2025-2026:<br>44% of the goals that were developed for students came from the GOLD assessment data (goal is 100%)                                                                                 |
| Reading Well by 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade | NWEA-MAP District Testing  | NWEA RIT Scores                                 | MSA only had one 3rd grade student taking the assessment this year. Average scores vary from year to year due to the small number of students taking the test each year.                                                                           | 2025-2026:<br>During the 24-25 and 25-26 school years, 25% of students received a 188 RIT score or better and 67% of the remaining students were referred for additional intervention and support |
| Closing the Achievement Gap           | PBIS – SWIS reports        | SWIS reports<br>IEP benchmarks                  | Student use of Mental Health Services and proactive behavior/coping strategies have increased. More students are showing substantial progress and/or meeting IEP goals.                                                                            | 2024-2025:<br>93% of the goals and objectives in students' IEPs/IFSPs were reported as adequate progress or goal met (goal is 85%)                                                                |
| Career and College Readiness          | IEP Transition Assessments | IEP transition planning<br>IEP transition goals | MSA provides coursework and experiential learning opportunities to help our students reach their transition goals/objectives.                                                                                                                      | 2024-2025:<br>97% of transition goals/objectives were reported as adequate progress or goal met (goal is 85%)                                                                                     |
| Graduation Rates                      | Graduation documentation   | Graduation rates<br>IEP data                    | MSA has consistently had a 100% graduation rate (with the understanding that some students stay beyond the usual 4 years of HS due to their individual needs). Historical data over the past 5 years shows that MSA exceeds a 95% graduation rate. | 2024-2025:<br>MSA continued to have a 100% graduation rate                                                                                                                                        |

### Part B: Evidence of Effectiveness

No Evidence-based Practices were identified.

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### Statutes applied to the Minnesota State Academies:

M.S. 125A.61; M.S. 125A.62; M.S. 125A.63; M.S. 125A.64; M.S. 125A.65; M.S. 125A.66; M.S. 125A.67; M.S. 125A.68; M.S. 125A.69; M.S. 125A.70; M.S. 125A.71; M.S. 125A.72; M.S. 125A.73; M.S. 125A.74

## Program: Minnesota State Academies

## Activity: Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf

<https://www.msa.state.mn.us/>

## AT A GLANCE

- The Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (MSAD) has provided educational services to students who are deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing since 1863.
- Students from over 50 different school districts attend classes at MSAD.
- MSAD is the only school in the state that provides a residential component specifically designed to meet the needs of deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing students.
- Students who live outside the Faribault area may live in the dormitory and participate in a variety of enrichment, educational, recreational, and social activities, including athletics. Students in the Faribault area may also participate in those activities and commute from their homes.
- MSAD provides a fully accessible educational environment, incorporating American Sign Language (ASL)/English bilingual strategies to support growth in language and learning.

## PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

MSAD provides educational programming and support services for deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing students at different ages (Birth through age 22) throughout the school, utilizing ASL and English throughout the day to support proficiency in both languages for learning and communication. Instruction is provided by licensed teachers who have knowledge, skills, and background in working with deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing individuals and lessons/instructional units are tailored to meet the learning, language, and communication needs of each student. Academic programs within MSAD include **Early Childhood** (Ages birth-5); **Preschool** (Ages 2-4); **Pre-Kindergarten** (Ages 4-5); **Elementary School** (Kindergarten- 5th grade); **Middle School** (6th-8th grades); and **High School** (9th-12th grades). Students may also select the option of attending part-time classes at a local public or private school as appropriate. For some students with specific needs, the **Academy Plus (A+) Transition program** for students aged 18-22 is an option, providing additional instruction and practice in the areas of academic and language development, home living skills, community work, access to community resources, transportation, leisure & recreational activities, preparation for post-secondary education, and job-related skills for gainful employment.

MSAD's residential program complements the education program by providing activities and experiences outside of the classroom that enhance whole-child development, including social skills; cultural identity development; participation in organizations, activities, and athletics; and interactions with peers who have similar hearing levels and signing skills.

## SERVICES PROVIDED

The Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf provides services in the following areas:

- **Academic Achievement:** Classes are rigorous, based on state standards and Individual Educational Program goals, and lead to graduation. Programming at MSAD provides students with fully accessible educational activities and utilize ASL and English so that students can have direct instruction and communication with their teachers and peers within their classrooms.
- **Whole child development:** Students at MSAD participate in activities in and outside of the classroom, including activities in MSAD's residential program, that are fully accessible, with a critical mass of deaf,

deaf-blind, and/or hard-of-hearing peers. This provides them with opportunities to develop social skills, language and communication, and participate in extracurricular activities/experiences appropriate to their age.

- **Special Education:** Individual needs of students are identified through appropriate assessments/evaluations selected by the student's IEP team, involving parents/guardians and educational professionals knowledgeable with the learning, language, and communication needs of deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing students. Services, accommodations/modifications, and instructional strategies are selected carefully, based on each student's individual needs, providing support for growth towards meeting their transition goals.

## RESULTS

### Part A: Performance Data

| Measure                             | Measure type                       | Measure data source  | Historical trend                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Most recent data                                 |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| % of students proficient in Reading | State Assessment Results - Reading | Annual State Testing | About 16% of students eligible for testing were opted out by parents due to inaccessible or inappropriate testing methods. Due to the small number of students taking the tests, our test scores fluctuate greatly from year to year. | 2025 Spring: 28.3% partially meets or proficient |
| % of students proficient in Math    | State Assessment Results - Math    | Annual State Testing | About 16% of students eligible for testing were opted out by parents due to inaccessible or inappropriate testing methods. Due to the small number of students taking the tests, our test scores fluctuate greatly from year to year. | 2025 Spring: 13.5% partially meets or proficient |
| % of students proficient in Science | State Assessment Results - Science | Annual State Testing | About 16% of students eligible for testing were opted out by parents due to inaccessible or inappropriate testing methods. Due to the small number of students taking the tests, our test scores fluctuate greatly from year to year. | 2023 Spring MSAD: 25.1%<br>2025 Spring: No data  |

### Part B: Evidence of Effectiveness

No Evidence-based Practices were identified.

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### Statutes applied to the Minnesota State Academies:

M.S. 125A.61; M.S. 125A.62; M.S. 125A.63; M.S. 125A.64; M.S. 125A.65; M.S. 125A.66; M.S. 125A.67; M.S. 125A.68; M.S. 125A.69; M.S. 125A.70; M.S. 125A.71; M.S. 125A.72; M.S. 125A.73; M.S. 125A.74

**Program: Minnesota State Academies****Activity: Minnesota State Academy for the Blind**<https://www.msa.state.mn.us>**AT A GLANCE**

- The Minnesota State Academy for the Blind (MSAB) has provided educational services to students who are blind, visually impaired, and/or deaf-blind since 1866.
- Students from more than 40 different school districts attend classes at MSAB.
- MSAB is the only school in the state that provides a residential component specifically designed to meet the needs of blind, visually impaired, and/or deaf-blind students.
- Students who live outside the Faribault area may live in the dormitory and participate in a variety of enrichment, educational, recreational, and social activities, including athletics. Students in the Faribault area may also participate in those activities but commute from their homes.
- MSAB provides a fully accessible educational environment, incorporating Braille and technology, to support growth in language and learning.

**PURPOSE AND CONTEXT**

MSAB provides educational programming and support services for blind, visually impaired, and/or deaf-blind students at different ages throughout the school, from birth through age 22. Instruction is provided by licensed teachers who have knowledge, skills, and background in working with blind and visually impaired individuals and lessons/instructional units are tailored to meet the learning, language, and communication needs of each student. Instruction is provided in small group settings with emphasis on exposure to Braille and assistive technology. MSAB's specially designed curriculum includes academic skills, communication, orientation and mobility training, social skills, independent living, recreation and leisure activities, career education, and self-advocacy instruction. Students with multiple challenges have increased support provided by teachers and assistants with specific training to support their physical and learning needs. Some students may also select the option of attending classes at a local public or private school as appropriate. For some students with specific needs, the Academy Plus (A+) Transition program for students aged 18-22 is an option, providing additional instruction and practice in the areas of academic development, home living skills, grooming, community work, access to community resources, transportation, leisure and recreational activities, preparation for post-secondary education, and job-related skills for gainful employment.

MSAB's residential program complements the education program by providing activities and experiences outside of the classroom that enhances whole-child development alongside peers who are also blind or visually impaired. Students are encouraged to participate in athletic competitions like track, wrestling, and swimming, and club activities such as chess. The dormitories have facilities which promote life skills such as cooking and grooming. A semi-independent living program challenges students to learn practical decision-making skills in a home environment, such as budgeting, meal preparation, and laundry, among others.

**SERVICES PROVIDED**

The Minnesota State Academy for the Blind provides services in the following areas:

- **Academic Achievement:** Classes are rigorous, based on state standards and Individual Education Plan goals, and lead to graduation. Programming at MSAB provides students with fully accessible educational

activities and utilizes Braille and/or assistive technology so that students can have access to all instructional materials and activities within their classroom.

- **Whole child development:** Students at MSAB participate in activities in and outside of the classroom, including activities in MSAB's residential program, which are fully accessible, with a critical mass of blind, visually impaired, and/or deafblind peers. This provides them with opportunities to develop social skills, language and communication, and participate in extracurricular activities/experiences appropriate to their age.
- **Special Education:** Individual needs of students are identified through appropriate assessments and evaluations selected by the student's Individual Educational Program team, involving parents/guardians and educational professionals knowledgeable with the learning, language, and communication needs of blind and visually impaired students. Services, accommodations/modifications, and instructional strategies are selected carefully, based on each student's individual needs, providing support for growth towards meeting their transition goals.

## RESULTS

### Part A: Performance Data

| Measure                             | Measure type                       | Measure data source  | Historical trend                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Most recent data                                   |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| % of students proficient in Reading | State Assessment Results - Reading | Annual State Testing | More than 90% of students eligible for testing were opted out by parents due to inaccessible or inappropriate testing methods. Due to the small number of students taking the tests, our test scores fluctuate greatly from year to year. | 2025 Spring: 100% partially meets; none proficient |
| % of students proficient in Math    | State Assessment Results - Math    | Annual State Testing | More than 90% of students eligible for testing were opted out by parents due to inaccessible or inappropriate testing methods. Due to the small number of students taking the tests, our test scores fluctuate greatly from year to year. | 2025 Spring: 25% partially meets or proficient     |
| % of students proficient in Science | State Assessment Results - Science | Annual State Testing | More than 90% of students eligible for testing were opted out by parents due to inaccessible or inappropriate testing methods. Due to the small number of students taking the tests, our test scores fluctuate greatly from year to year. | 2023 Spring MSAB: 50%<br>2025 Spring: No data      |

### Part B: Evidence of Effectiveness

No Evidence-based Practices were identified.

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### Statutes applied to the Minnesota State Academies:

M.S. 125A.61; M.S. 125A.62; M.S. 125A.63; M.S. 125A.64; M.S. 125A.65; M.S. 125A.66; M.S. 125A.67; M.S. 125A.68; M.S. 125A.69; M.S. 125A.70; M.S. 125A.71; M.S. 125A.72; M.S. 125A.73; M.S. 125A.74

**Program: Minnesota State Academies****Activity: Minnesota State Academies Operations**<https://www.msa.state.mn.us/>**AT A GLANCE**

- Minnesota State Academies Operations include central administration, student support services, human resources, business services, physical plant operations, health services, food services, information technology, and interpreter services, supporting staff and students on both the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf and Minnesota State Academy for the Blind.
- Approximately 40% of the students enrolled in the Academies live on campus in the dormitories during the week, requiring 24 hours a day supervision and services.
- Nursing staff provide around-the-clock medical support to students during the school day and after school to the students living in the dormitories.
- Physical plant workers respond to alarms and unanticipated system malfunctions, such as heating, cooling.
- Food Service employees and Interpreter services are scheduled when needed on weekdays, evenings, and on occasion, weekends for student and staff activities/functions.

**PURPOSE AND CONTEXT**

The Minnesota State Academies implemented a shared services model for operations to provide top-quality services to a group of students with very specific and resource-intensive needs. Rather than utilizing two parallel systems, a single service delivery model supports both campuses and all services for the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind and the Minnesota Academy for the Deaf. The campuses are about one mile apart and Academies personnel frequently work on both campuses, providing close support and attention to the student body and faculty at both schools.

**SERVICES PROVIDED**

- Central Administration (Superintendent's office): Responsible for the overall functioning of the State Academies, along with the support of the Minnesota State Academies Board. The Superintendent supervises both schools with the assistance of administrators for each campus as well as department heads of shared service divisions.
- Outreach Services: Provides consultation and direct support to school districts statewide in relation to educational approaches, evaluation/assessments, instructional strategies, parent/family educational activities, and other activities upon request.
- Online Academy: Supports access to educational classes for deaf and hard of hearing students statewide – with focus on providing visually accessible coursework provided by licensed D/HH teachers.
- Student Support Services (including Special Education Services): Responsible to ensure compliance with federal and state laws, regulations, and requirements to meet students' needs as defined in their Individual Education Programs (IEPs) – includes all related and support services that are available to students on both campuses.
- Human Resources: Supports approximately 250 full-time, part-time, and intermittent employees within 7 labor groups. Supports staff members with related services such as insurance coverage, benefit management, and job audits.
- Fiscal Services: Processes payroll, issues payments, coordinates purchases, and provides general budget oversight.

- Physical Plant Operations: Maintains 18 buildings and grounds on two campuses, covering 40 acres. Oversees scheduling and maintenance of school vehicles. Supports oversight of new construction. Responsible for safety operations of both campuses.
- Health Services: Provides health services on both campuses for all students, including medication and monitoring, and providing on-call support after hours.
- Food Services: Prepares three meals each day for residential students and lunch for day students on both campuses.
- Information Technology: Provides support for all technology needs on campus, including student information systems, web site support, classroom technology and applications, and videophones
- Interpreting and ASL Evaluation Services: Provides interpretation of information using ASL, English, and on occasion, other languages such as Spanish or Somali. Provides tactile interpreter services for deaf-blind students. Supports students in mainstreaming programs in local schools. Supports Sign Language Proficiency Interviews and ratings for the Academy for the Deaf as well as school districts statewide.

## RESULTS

### Part A: Performance Data

| Measure                           | Measure type | Measure data source          | Historical trend                             | Most recent data |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Invoices issued*                  | Quantity     | Fiscal Services Records      | 2023: 128<br>2024: 75<br>2025: 122           | 2026: 124        |
| Contracts generated**             | Quantity     | Fiscal Services Records      | 2023: 36<br>2024: 22<br>2025: 35             | 2026: 36         |
| Physical Plant Projects Completed | Quantity     | Physical Plant Records       | 2023: 4<br>2024: 3                           | 2025-2026: 5     |
| Interpreter Services Provided     | Quantity     | Interpreter Services Records | 2023: 3,367<br>2024: 4,001<br>2025: 4,672.50 | 2026: 5,377.50   |

\*Our office is responsible for the invoicing of Accounts Receivables relating to Orientation and Mobility services, outside interpreting, office rental and invoices sent to other state agencies for services or reimbursement for various programming.

\*\*Our office is responsible for initiating contracts such as Professional Technical Services which includes income, interagency, joint powers, Memorandum of Understandings and Annual Plans.

### Part B: Evidence of Effectiveness

This activity/program funds infrastructure/core staffing/operations which cannot be evaluated using randomized control or quasi-experimental design methods.

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### Statutes applied to the Minnesota State Academies:

M.S. 125A.61; M.S. 125A.62; M.S. 125A.63; M.S. 125A.64; M.S. 125A.65; M.S. 125A.66; M.S. 125A.67; M.S. 125A.68; M.S. 125A.69; M.S. 125A.70; M.S. 125A.71; M.S. 125A.72; M.S. 125A.73; M.S. 125A.74