

Equity Audit

2024-2025



Math and Science Academy

Purpose Statement

The Math and Science Academy (MSA) in Woodbury, Minnesota, is committed to fostering an educational environment where all students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. As part of this commitment, MSA has undertaken an equity audit to identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities for creating a more inclusive and equitable school community.

The goal of this equity audit is to provide actionable insights to help MSA strengthen its equity practices. By analyzing data and reviewing institutional structures, this audit will offer a clear understanding of current inequities and recommend strategies for ensuring that every student has the support and resources needed to succeed.

This report represents a critical step in MSA's ongoing journey toward equity and excellence; aligning with the school's mission and vision to inspire, and prepare students for a future of innovation, leadership, and collaboration in an increasingly diverse world.

As a mission driven charter school, it is imperative that all students are supported equitably in their pursuit of educational excellence. Our mission and vision call us to provide an **inclusive** curriculum and instruction for **all** students.

Mission:

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

Vision:

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

This audit will review the changes in demographics, the student call to change in 2021, and equity policies. In addition, the audit will review data and analysis of current outcomes and engagement. The audit will conclude with recommendations and next steps.

The report will serve as a baseline for an annual review of outcomes and data to drive changes in instructional practices and engagement efforts to insure academic excellence for all students.

Math and Science Academy Narrative

Shift in Demographics

Since its founding in 1999, Math and Science Academy (MSA) in Woodbury, Minnesota, has grown both in size and diversity. At its inception, MSA's student body did not include any students of color, reflecting a limited representation of the broader community's demographic landscape at the time.

Over the past 25 years, however, MSA has experienced significant demographic shifts. As of 2024, the student population has become more diverse, with 68.6% of students identifying as

students of color. This growth highlights MSA's evolving role as an inclusive educational institution, attracting families from various racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

This diversification aligns with broader demographic changes in the region and underscores MSA's commitment to providing equitable and high-quality education to all students. By embracing its increasingly diverse community, MSA continues to reflect the values of representation, inclusion, and opportunity.

Student Voice in a Call to Action

Alongside this demographic growth, MSA has also embraced an increasing awareness of neurodiversity within its community. The school recognizes that diversity extends beyond race and ethnicity, encompassing varied learning styles, cognitive strengths, and challenges.

In recent years, MSA students have taken a proactive role in advocating for change, emphasizing the importance of aligning equity policies with their lived experiences. Students of color and students with neurodiversity have called for meaningful changes in how the school ensures equitable access to resources, fair treatment, and an inclusive environment where every individual feels valued.

These student-led efforts underscore a collective desire for progress, transparency, and accountability in addressing inequities. Their voices are a powerful reminder of MSA's responsibility to continuously improve its practices to support all students fully and equitably.

Equity Policies

In addition to racial, gender, and cultural diversity, MSA has also embraced neurodiversity, recognizing the unique contributions and needs of students with varied cognitive and learning profiles. As a result, MSA has worked to create an environment that values all forms of diversity as essential to the school's mission and success.

The role of student voice has been central to MSA's progress in equity. In recent years, students have been instrumental in advocating for change, challenging the school to address inequities and ensure that policies reflect their lived experiences. This includes calls for more inclusive practices for students of color, those with neurodiversity, and students with varying gender identities and sexual orientations; fostering a culture of belonging and fairness.

Responding to this advocacy, MSA has revised its equity policies to prioritize student voice, acknowledging the critical insights and leadership students bring to these efforts. Their contributions have shaped policies that ensure equity remains at the forefront of all that MSA does, reaffirming the school's commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for every member of its community.

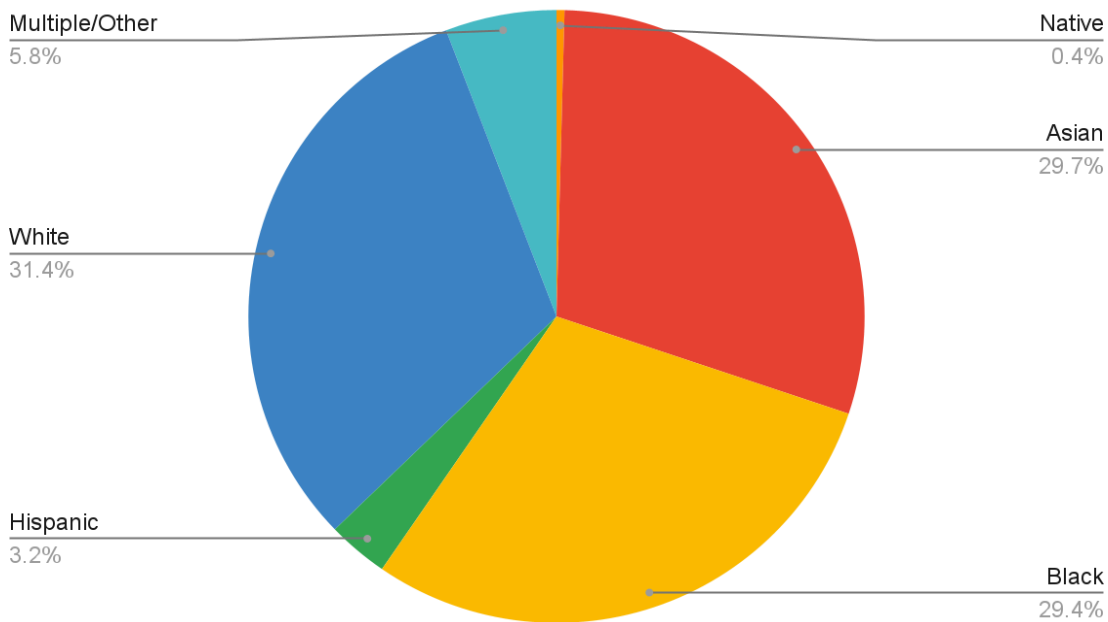
Data and Analysis

The Math and Science Academy board of directors selected “Success for All Students” as a pillar of the strategic plan in the spring of 2022. To that end, MSA has implemented a robust Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to support all students in their learning. Our MTSS framework has five areas of focus: Equity, Professional Learning Communities (content area teacher teams), Student Success Teams (grade level teacher teams), Positive Behavior Interventions and Support, and Specialized Services. This work has led to a culture of caring and collaboration that has manifested in an increase of diverse learners and an overall improvement in the quality of education that each student receives. This section will examine the current data to determine opportunities for further growth.

Student Demographic Data

Student diversity has increased at MSA steadily since the school’s founding. Since 2020, the number of non-white students has increased from 50.5% to 68.6% of the total population. The equity initiatives that have been implemented by the Board and Administration have contributed to a more welcoming and inclusive environment that draws in and retains students of color. By contrast the South Washington School District community, home to Math and Science Academy, is made up of 78% white residents ([NCES, 2024](#)). Math and Science Academy has 31.4% white students. This difference indicates Math and Science Academy has become a destination school for students of all races and ethnicities.

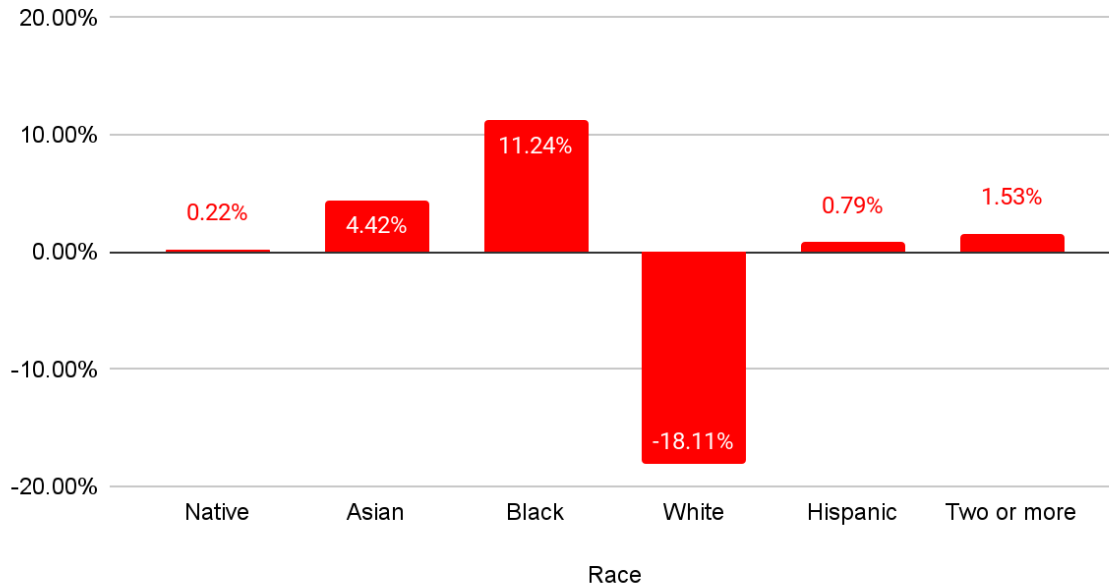
2024 Student Racial Demographics



The trend data show that in the last 5 years the proportion of black and Asian students has increased by 11.24% and 4.42% respectively. The student enrollment has increased over the

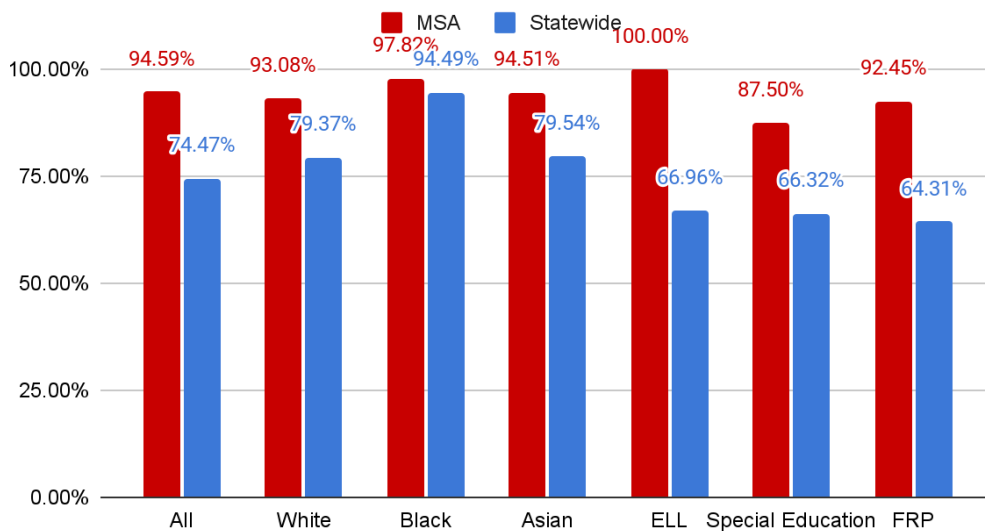
same time period. The number of white students is roughly the same, but more students of color are entering the enrollment lottery, resulting in a shift in school demographics.

Demographic Trend 2020-2025



Once enrolled at Math and Science Academy, students of all backgrounds attend school at higher than average rates. Our black students have the highest attendance rates of any racial group, suggesting a supportive and welcoming environment.

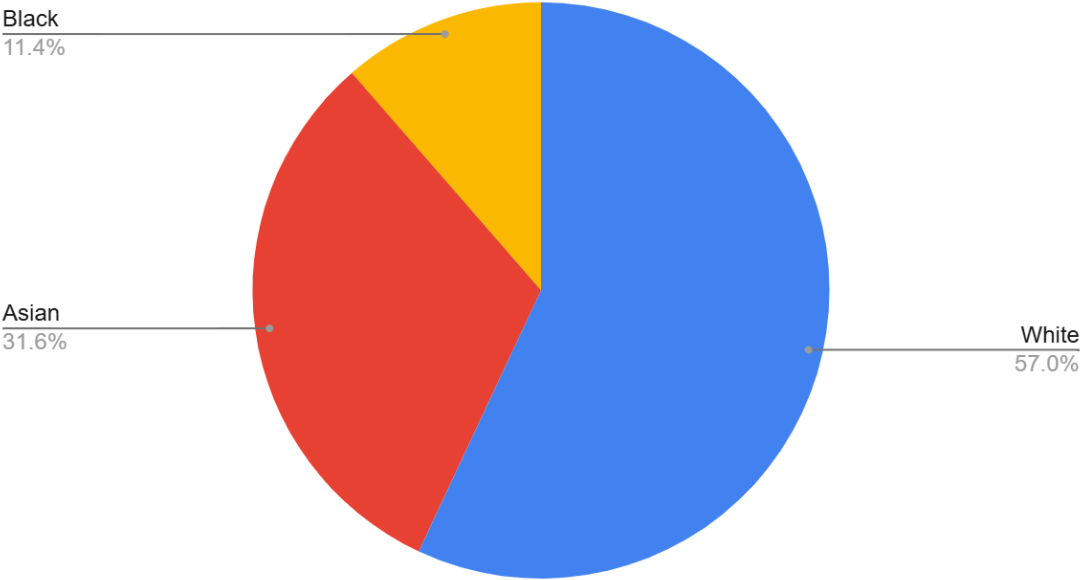
Percent of Students in School 90% of the time



Parent Involvement

Math and Science Academy has been very intentional about creating a safe and welcoming environment for students of all backgrounds. The shift in school culture has not resulted in increased non-white parental involvement. Parent involvement is measured here by participation in the school board elections. This is an area for growth. More intentional work needs to be done to ensure that all parents have their voices heard throughout the school as well as at the board level. Our white parents represent approximately 31% of the population, but comprised 57% of the voters in the most recent board election. Data has not been collected on the racial breakdown of families who attend conferences. This data collection is underway for the current school year.

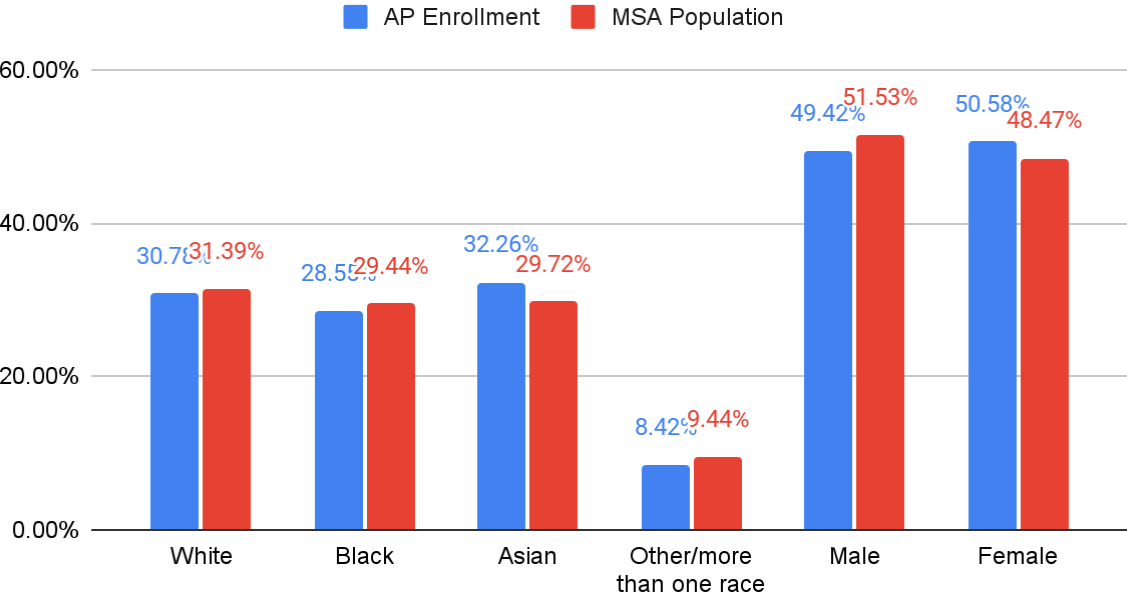
2024 Board Election Participation



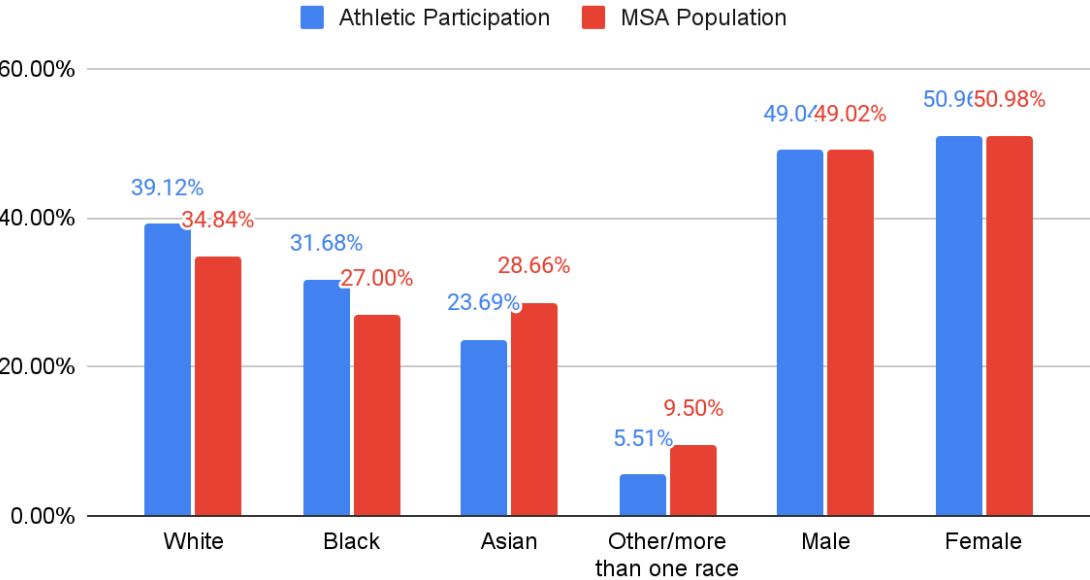
Student Participation in Rigorous Courses and Athletics

Two years ago, Math and Science Academy adopted a philosophy that encouraged students to participate in more rigorous coursework and athletics. The Board and Administration embarked on intentional shifts to ensure equal access to all students. All students are now able to opt in to advanced placement and concurrent enrollment college courses if they feel they are ready to take on the added academic load. In addition, the board rescinded Policy 510.1 ~ Extracurricular Eligibility, in October 2022. This policy disproportionately barred students from participating in any athletic or extracurricular enrichment activity if they were struggling in a class.

Percent Advanced Placement Enrollment vs. Population



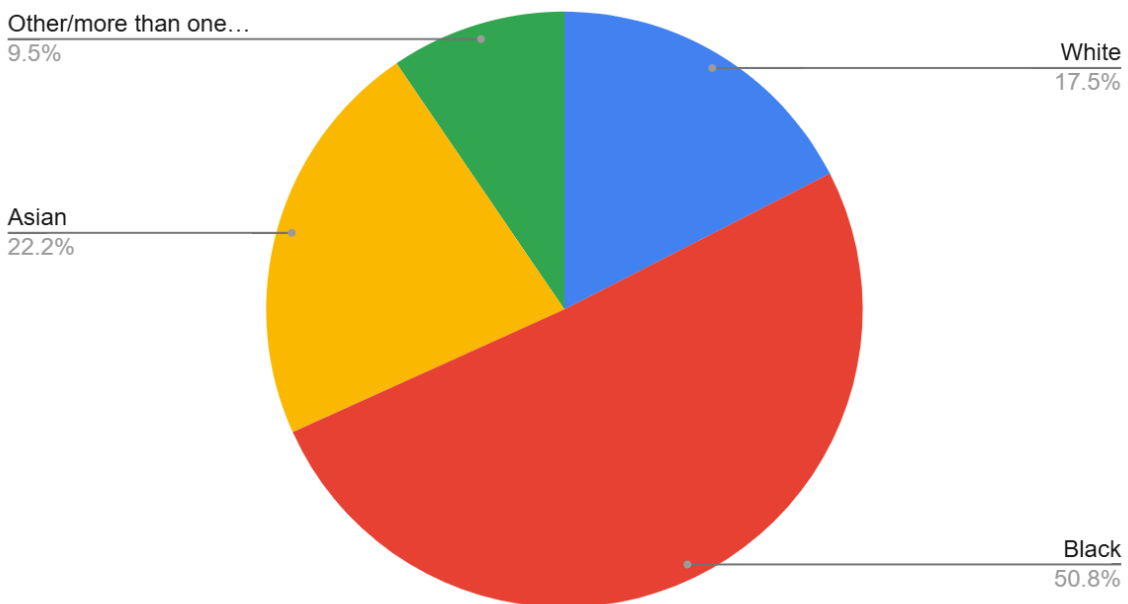
Athletic Participation and Population (2023-24 SY)



Behavior Data

At the end of the 2024 school year, there were 63 behavior incidents recorded and five out of school suspensions. Black students were referred to the office and suspended at higher rates than the overall population. During this time frame explicit training on culturally responsive teaching and equity work were provided to staff. A deeper understanding of why more black students are referred to the office for behavior is needed. This understanding will drive future equity work.

Behavior Events by Race



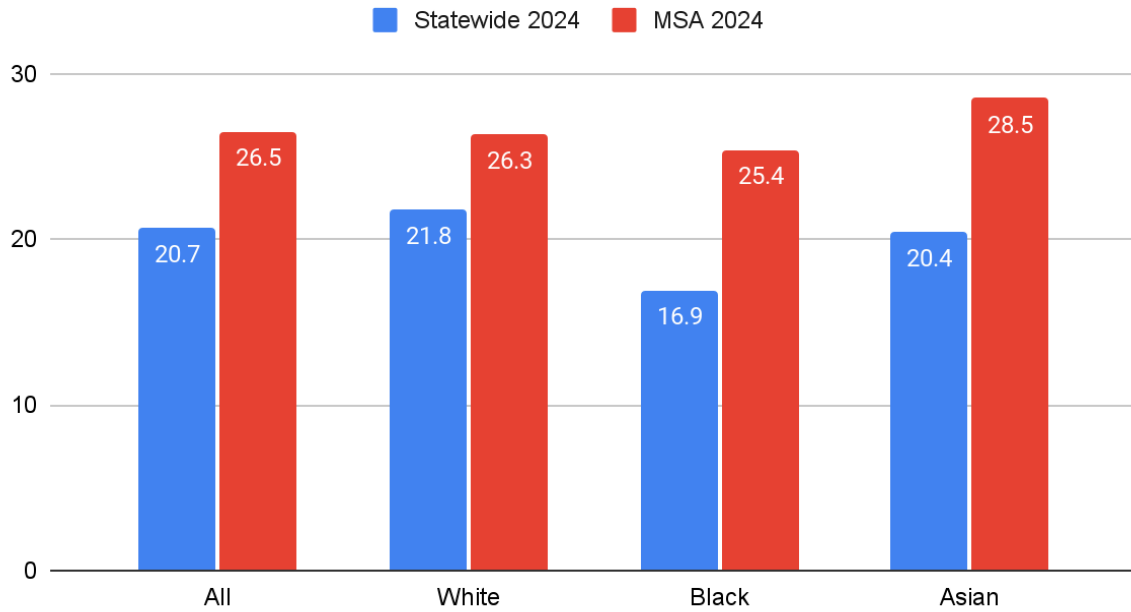
Standardized Test Data

Math and Science Academy students of all ethnicities perform well on standardized tests. However, there are still disparities between demographic groups. In this section ACT data, MCA data, and achievement gap data is presented.

ACT Data

ACT data show there is a gap of less than one point between black and white students. Asian students outperform white students by 2.2 points. These scores all significantly exceed the statewide ACT data in all areas. The gap between black students at MSA and statewide is 8.5 points.

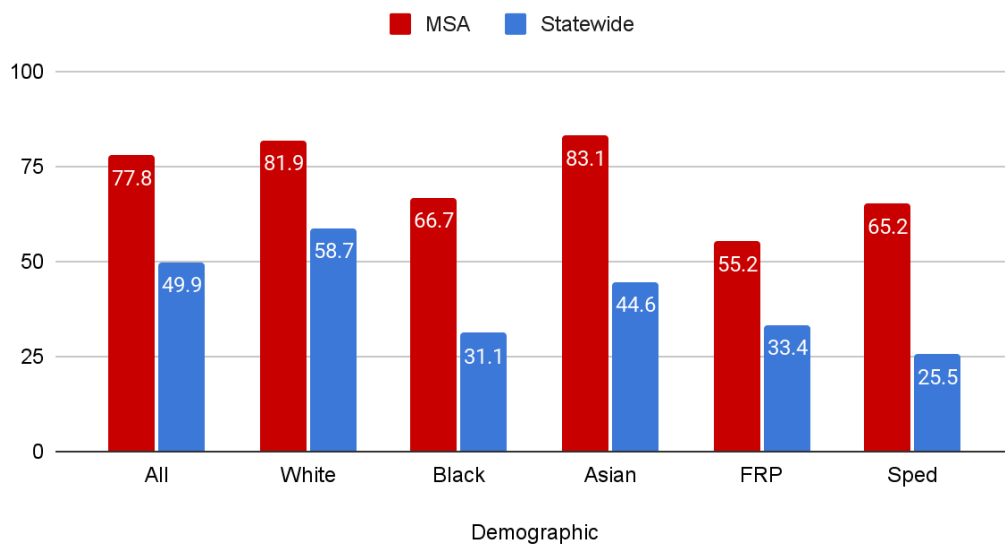
ACT Composite Scores by Ethnicity



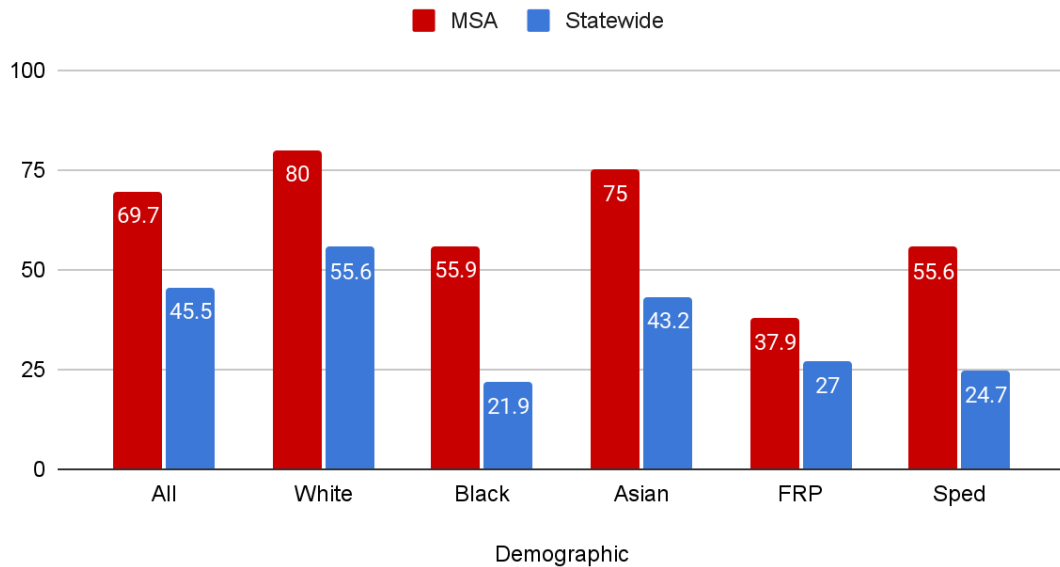
MCA Data

Math and Science Academy is proud to say all of our racial groups outperform the state average and the highest performing demographic (white) in the state in the areas of math and reading. Gaps do persist between racial groups at Math and Science Academy, which is an unfortunate norm in this country. However, our students of color dramatically outperform their statewide peers.

MSA and Statewide Reading Proficiency All Grades 2024

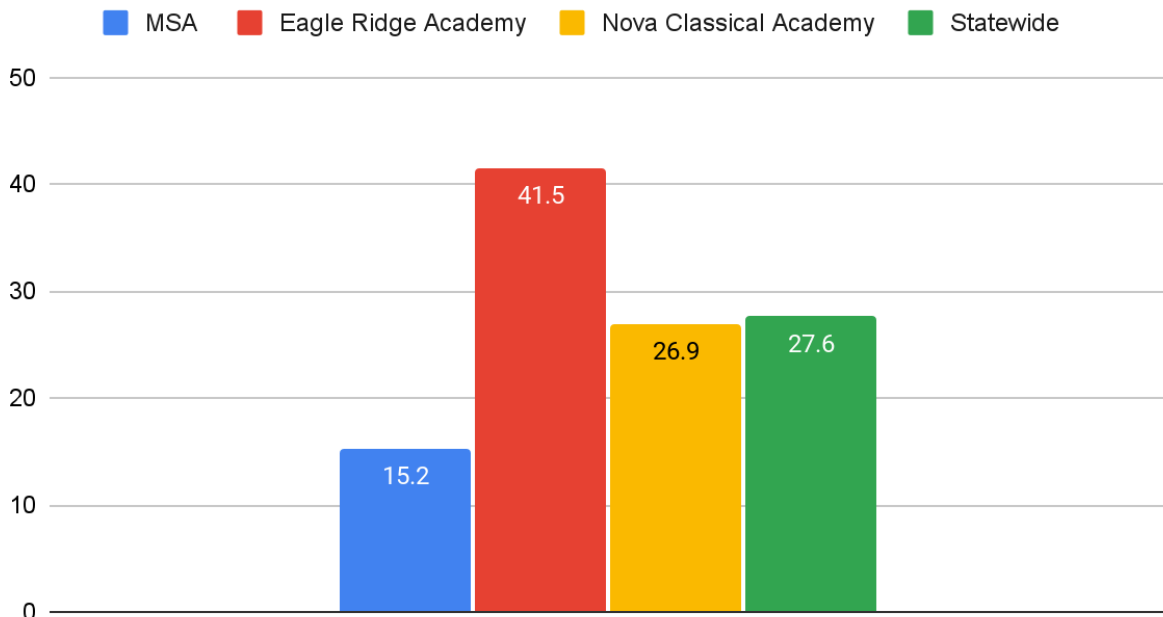


MSA and Statewide Math Proficiency All Grades 2024

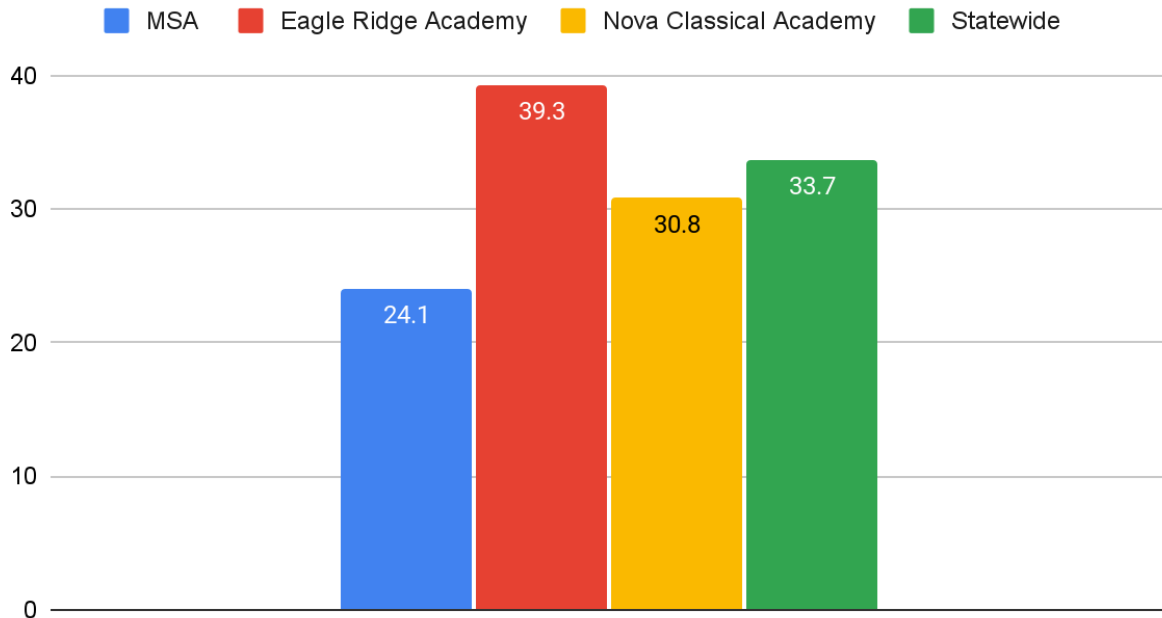


Math and Science Academy still has significant achievement gaps. However, when compared to the state as a whole and other high performing charters in the metropolitan area our gaps are significantly smaller.

Reading MCA Achievement Gap White/Black



Math MCA Achievement Gap White/Black



* St. Croix Preparatory Upper School is not included in the data because their black population was too small to publicly report scores.

Conclusions

With the significant demographic changes, MSA has maintained its tradition of academic excellence. The school consistently outperforms state averages on standardized tests and is consistently ranked among the top ten schools in Minnesota. This achievement underscores MSA's ability to provide a rigorous and high-quality education to its diverse student body.

However, while MSA celebrates its successes, areas of concern remain, particularly regarding equity in disciplinary practices. Recent data reveals disparities in behavioral incident reporting, with 50% of 63 behavioral referrals involving black students. This disproportionality raises important questions about equity and fairness in the application of behavior referrals. Addressing these disparities is crucial to ensuring that all students experience a supportive and equitable learning environment.

Parents are important to student success. Our students of color do not experience the same level of parent involvement as their white peers. The administration received feedback from stakeholders that the same parents were on many committees which made them feel as if their voice was not as important. Intentional committee recruitment has resulted in more diverse committees, but that work is not enough. School board election participation is the only quantitative measure available at this time and the gaps in participation are stark. Data collection on conference participation is underway. It is imperative that MSA discover the ways

in which diverse parents would like to participate in their child's education and have their voices heard in school governance.

Recommendations

The proud tradition of excellence in education remains strong as diversity efforts have resulted in more students of color selecting Math and Science Academy. However, gaps do persist. The data show disproportionality in office referrals and parental involvement.

To address these concerns, the administration recommends the following.

1. Continued equity work. Staff have been trained on cultural responsiveness, grading equity, and their own personal equity journey. This work has resulted in a more inclusive environment for students. The data demonstrate a deeper understanding of discipline practices is needed. A study of the nature of the behavior instances is warranted and then strategies must be implemented to mitigate the disparities.
2. Welcoming parents of color is essential for the success of their students. The board embarked on an intentional diversification of committees in the last year and has continued that work. Implementation of a Black Student Union and now an Asian Student Union have drawn in more parents of color. However, additional strategies are needed. The following work is recommended:
 - a. Continuation of a Black Student Union night in February for students and their families to celebrate black excellence in education;
 - b. Intentional engagement of diverse parents at the spring Multicultural Night;
 - c. A candidate forum prior to the board elections that will assist all parents with the voting process, an understanding of the candidates, and the importance of their voice in school governance; and
 - d. Conference attendance tracking and outreach to parents who were unable to attend conferences will help ensure all parents have a conference. Adjustments will be made to continuously improve conference attendance as the data is collected and analyzed.
3. Continued staff training and support on using the Multi Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model to identify students with learning gaps and then address those gaps with data driven solutions.
4. Progress monitoring is essential to continued growth. An annual review of equity data and implementation of strategies to mitigate gaps is warranted. It is recommended that the board set equity goals and measure outcomes at least annually.