

# MODEL SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

Washington, D.C.



#MSSDeagles

[mssd.gallaudet.edu](https://mssd.gallaudet.edu)



# THE MSSD ADVANTAGE

## A PROUD HISTORY

The Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD) was established in 1969 by the U.S. Congress and is part of a 150-year history of educating deaf and hard of hearing students on the campus of Gallaudet University. MSSD enrolls high school students throughout the country and the U.S. territories. Today, the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center operates MSSD as a demonstration high school in service to the nation.

As a demonstration school, MSSD attracts collaborations from educators and researchers from across the country interested in exploring bilingual teaching practices. Through its affiliation with Gallaudet University, a renowned institution of research and teacher education, University students and researchers learn with and mentor MSSD students. These advantages ensure dynamic practice and current theory in addition to a one-of-a-kind education for each student.

MSSD holds dual accreditation from the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf.

MSSD offers an incredible diversity of opportunities and has something for everyone—comprehensive support services, vibrant student organizations, a wide variety of sports, an outstanding performing arts program, and after-school activities such as student video productions, regional and national Academic Bowl competitions, a robotics team, and foreign travel.

The school's location in the nation's capital places MSSD students front and center to world-class educational and cultural resources.

MSSD invites prospective students and their families to attend one of several annual Open Houses. Visit the MSSD website and Facebook page for more information, the latest news, and events.

## LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Lead an organization  
Star in a play  
Captain a sports team  
Become a Peer Advisor  
... and many more!



## Washington, D.C. Living and Learning

- Front row seat to the nation's capital
- Field trips to the Smithsonian and other museums
- Events and workshops on Capitol Hill and at the White House
- Internships in government and nonprofit organizations
- Cultural events and performances
- Fun weekend shopping trips, restaurants, and sports activities





# ACADEMICS

MSSD offers an academically rigorous program with instruction that is aligned with the national Common Core State Standards. Classrooms are set up for optimal learning with visual access among students and teachers. Small class sizes allow students to have more instructional time with each other and with teachers.

All classes, programs, and services are conducted in American Sign Language (ASL). Students come from a wide range of communication backgrounds, with new signers receiving support through the Emerging Signers Program.

All students are expected to graduate with a diploma and pursue postsecondary goals. Students who do not meet diploma requirements but satisfy graduation requirements receive a certificate of completion.

Teachers and staff understand the unique communication and learning needs of students and serve as language and role models, encouraging students to reach their full academic, social, and creative potential.



## ■ AP and Honors Courses

MSSD offers Advanced Placement (AP), honors, and college dual credit courses to challenge students with a deeper look into subject matter through a wide variety of high-level assignments and reading.

AP courses are available in English, history, math, psychology, computer science, and science. Students who take and pass the AP tests can receive college credit for their courses. Honors courses are available in English, math, social studies, and science. College dual credit courses are available in math and technology.

## ■ Eagle Academy

For students who need additional academic support, MSSD offers the Eagle Academy. Students take a double period in either English or math classes, providing them with a structured block of time to focus on their individual needs. Instruction takes a multi-prong approach and includes ongoing assessment of skills using a variety of ASL, English, and mathematical assessment tools.

## ■ Technology

MSSD's campus is fully Wi-Fi compatible. Students can access computers for coursework and homework in each of the main academic classroom areas as well as in the Learning Resource Center. All classrooms are equipped with interactive, large-screen televisions that allow for touch control of computer applications. Students also have access to video equipment and editing software for student-directed film productions. Each department has its own ASL studio lab and computer lab.



## World-Class Field Trips

MSSD takes field trips to a whole different level. Here are some of the many sites visited in recent years:

- White House
- U.S. Capitol
- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. National Archives
- U.S. National Arboretum
- Folger Shakespeare Library
- Ford's Theatre
- Frederick Douglass National Historic Site
- International Spy Museum
- John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
- Library of Congress
- Newseum
- Smithsonian Institution museums (National Air and Space Museum, etc.)
- National Zoo
- Holocaust Memorial Museum
- National Geographic Museum
- National memorials

## Course Offerings

- English
- Math
- Science
- Social studies
- Electives:
  - 20th Century History Through Film
  - Art
  - ASL Literature and Production
  - ASLology
  - Botball
  - Creative Writing
  - Current Events, Trends, and Issues
  - Dance
  - Digital Media
  - Forensic Science
  - Graphic Design
  - ... and more!





# SERVICES



MSSD offers a broad range of academic and communication services that support student success in all areas of learning and living. Providers are certified or licensed in their specialty area and fluent in ASL. Services include:

- Individualized Education Program (IEP) development and advising
- School counseling
- Psychoeducational services
- Social work services
- Audiological and speech-language services
- Services for new signers
- Tutoring

## ■ Academic Planning

IEP case managers are classroom teachers who work with students, parents or legal guardians, and the IEP coordinator and other school personnel to develop an educational plan tailored to each student's needs and postsecondary goals.

Case managers also help monitor student progress and ensure students are progressing toward their IEP goals and becoming self-directed, independent, and resourceful learners.

## ■ ASL and New Signers

Academic instruction at MSSD is provided in ASL. Students enrolling at MSSD with limited ASL proficiency may initially need support. The Emerging Signers Program provides students with a range of services that may include in-classroom interpreting services, direct ASL instruction, and social-emotional support.

## ■ Audiological Services

Students can receive a wide variety of audiological services at no cost. Services may include, but are not limited to, comprehensive audiological evaluations, technology assessments and management (e.g., hearing aids, implants, assistive devices), and counseling for students and their families. A cochlear implant (CI) support group meets during the year for students with CIs or students interested in learning more about the technology. All students receive audiological services throughout the year on an as-needed basis.

## ■ School Counseling

MSSD counselors provide students with a variety of services that support their access to the academic curriculum, foster emotional intelligence, help strengthen transition skills that they will need in postsecondary environments, and increase their understanding of broader societal issues.

In addition to providing individual or group services as outlined in students' IEPs or in response to immediate needs, school counselors also coordinate school-wide workshops and programs on critical issues such as bullying prevention, positive mental wellness, and increasing awareness about multiple communities within our own.



## ■ School Psychology

The school psychologist provides cognitive, social-emotional, academic, and behavioral assessments that aid in the development of educational and transition plans. The school psychologist also works with teachers and students to support implementation of instructional strategies outlined in the students' IEPs.

## ■ Social Work

The MSSD social worker provides student counseling, family support, community outreach, and collaboration.

## ■ Speech-Language

Speech-language services are individualized based on each student's IEP. Services may include assessment of students' speech, language, and communication skills. Areas addressed in therapy may include spoken English, language, auditory training, literacy support, and general communication skill development. Services are provided individually, in small groups, or integrated within the classroom.

## ■ Tutoring

Students can schedule appointments with teachers after school for additional academic support. Tutoring is also available in the residence hall during weekday evenings.



# PREPARING FOR SUCCESS

Students at MSSD are encouraged to dream and think big as they pursue goals after their high school studies. Alumni have gone on to successful careers in business, education, law, government, the arts, social work, and many more fields.

MSSD offers students a variety of programs and transition services that encourage college exploration and career planning. Every year the school hosts a fair that showcases deaf and hard of hearing professionals in a variety of fields. Students work with transition staff and receive career counseling that helps them determine their postsecondary goals.



## ■ Work Experience

All seniors participate in the MSSD Internship Program, a semester-long learning experience that provides opportunities to develop positive work habits, learn how to interact with supervisors and coworkers, gain exposure to a variety of careers, and develop positive work attitudes and ethics. This type of career-based learning provides all students with knowledge, skills, and experiences that support their achievement during and beyond high school.

The MSSD Internship Program occurs during the school year. Seniors work on the Gallaudet University campus or off campus in a variety of government, private, and nonprofit settings in the Washington, D.C., metro area.

## ■ College Planning

MSSD assists students with the registration and coordination of testing accommodations for the ACT and the SAT, providing students with a convenient means of applying to colleges.

MSSD transition staff are available to assist with college searches, applications for scholarships and other forms of financial assistance, and the coordination of visits to and from admissions counselors at Gallaudet University and other institutions of higher education throughout the nation.

## ■ Community Service

MSSD students are required to complete a number of community service hours prior to graduation. Students have the option of fulfilling this requirement at home or through volunteer opportunities offered by MSSD. These volunteer opportunities vary and include serving at food drives, animal shelters, and community-based events. These experiences broaden students' exposure to civic engagement and bring valuable perspectives that color their postsecondary goals.





# STUDENT LIFE



Living on campus provides students with enhanced opportunities for development. Students study with classmates, participate in activities and clubs that provide them with invaluable leadership and organizational skills, and benefit from social opportunities that celebrate the Deaf experience.

The MSSD dorm is open seven days a week and staffed full time with residence educators who are fluent in ASL. The staff organizes activities, provides guidance, offers tutoring for academic support, and assists with any health or safety issues that arise.

All dorm common areas offer comfortable Wi-Fi accessible areas, televisions, videophones, a microwave, and computers for student use.

The MSSD Residence Hall features DeafSpace architecture principles, green space, dining areas, and meeting and lounge spaces for learning and living.

## ■ Weekend Activities

There is always something to do for students who live on campus:

- Visits to museums and parks
- Outdoor recreational adventures such as bicycling, camping, and hiking
- Beach trips
- Swimming in MSSD's eight-lane, full-sized pool
- Seasonal activities such as Homecoming week, haunted house tours, skiing, ice skating, amusement parks, and prom
- Bus trips to various shopping malls in the metropolitan area
- Shopping trips to local supermarkets

## ■ Special Events

MSSD students annually celebrate school traditions, such as Homecoming and prom, and host events and dances that create lasting memories and bonds of friendship.

Students also host events unique to MSSD, such as community service events, dog therapy, yoga events, and a film festival with other schools for the deaf participating. These events enrich the MSSD experience for everyone.



## Eagle Zone

The Eagle Zone is a comfortable hangout for students after school and on weekends offering table games, video games, board games, large-screen televisions, music, and a snack bar. Student organizations bring in guest speakers and host holiday and special events throughout the year. Students can even work in the snack bar and earn spending money.

On weekends, students participate in recreational activities, including game show and movie nights. They also have use of the gym, pool, and weight room at designated times.

Workshops and activities include guest presenters, holiday-themed parties, yoga, quiz nights, and multicultural events.





# OPPORTUNITIES

Learning at MSSD does not stop when classes end for the day. MSSD offers a wide range of activities to meet the interests of the students, including a top-notch theater program, student organizations and activities, sports teams, and deaf-friendly travel experiences.

In addition to athletics, students participate in various national competitions that foster teamwork. These events include the annual Academic Bowl hosted by Gallaudet University, Congressional art competitions, film festivals, essay contests, Botball competitions in which students solve robotics problems, and space camp.

These learning opportunities complement the education students receive in class and bring to life many skills that are essential for postsecondary success.



## ■ Performing Arts

The Performing Arts Program produces three shows a year, including a fall play, a winter dance concert, and a spring play that is often directed by a student. Students take on all kinds of roles—on stage, backstage, and in the theater box office. Alumni have gone on to appear in professional theater and Hollywood productions and to perform the national anthem at the Super Bowl.

Students take on production roles that match their interests: directing and assistant directing, set design, costume design, ASL translation of scripts, choreography, and light design. These experiences provide students with creative challenges that foster critical thinking and planning skills, all while building self-esteem and lasting friendships.

## ■ Travel Near and Far

In addition to world-class visit destinations in Washington, D.C., MSSD broadens learning with overseas travel that allows juniors and seniors to experience firsthand the history and culture of another country. Recent travel includes trips to Thailand and Italy. These trips, led by guides who are deaf, include visits to local deaf schools and communities.

## ■ STEAM Exploration

Opportunities abound for engagements across science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics (STEAM) at MSSD. Beyond field trips in and around D.C., students often attend STEAM festivals and conferences and prepare to present their own innovations at our annual STEAM showcase. Programming is a common thread found across the disciplines but features most prominently in our AP computer science program as well as robotics. Student participation in annual Botball competitions represents the culmination of a term spent honing their skills in the development of robots and Arduino-inspired interactives. MSSD's Think-A-Bit Lab will foster the rich environment that empowers our students to surpass their greatest achievements yet and inspire them to truly optimize their potential.

## ■ Tomorrow's Leaders

Students participate in and lead after-school organizations such as the Student Body Government, the Junior National Association of the Deaf, and the Peer Advisor program. Students vote for officers and representatives; facilitate meetings; form committees; work with staff sponsors; host activities; fundraise toward goals; and gain valuable communication, organizational, and self-advocacy skills.



## Student Organizations and Activities

At MSSD, the opportunities are as wide as the horizon:

- Academic Bowl
- Botball
- Class officers
- Gym, pool, and weight room
- Intramural sports
- Junior National Association of the Deaf
- Media productions
- Peer Advisor program
- Sports
- Student Body Government
- Student Enterprises (opportunities to work as peer tutors, Blue/Red crew, Eagle Zone assistants, etc.)
- Yearbook





# ATHLETICS



It is always memorable when students wear their school's red, white, and blue colors and represent the entire school community in athletics. MSSD athletes come from all over the country. Classmates, families, alumni, and friends support the teams as they go head-to-head against other schools at home, during away games, and at Homecoming. Fans turn out to cheer for the Eagles wherever they travel, and especially when they play in or host invitational tournaments with teams from multiple schools for the deaf.

MSSD is proud to provide a comprehensive athletics program that emphasizes character and teamwork. All coaching staff and the athletic trainer are fluent in ASL and carry dual roles as mentors in their sport and as models of confident, healthy deaf and hard of hearing adults.

## ■ Eagle Spirit

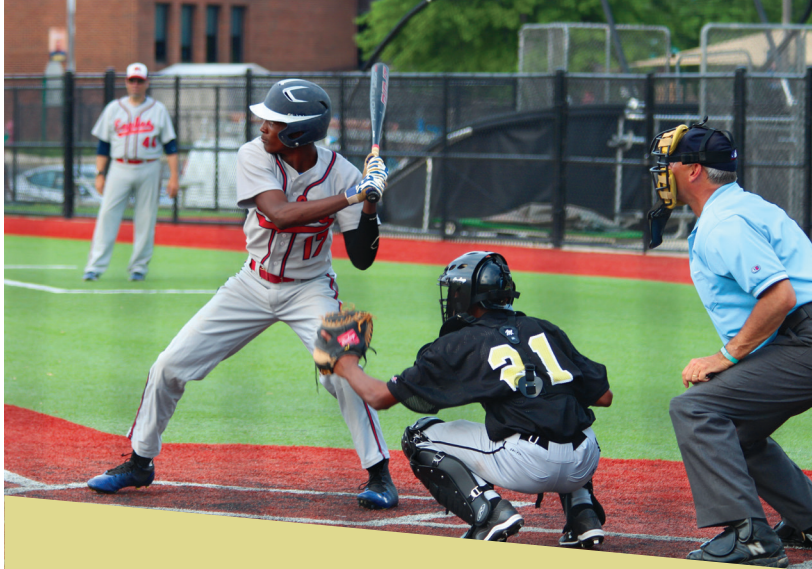
Eagle pride is found in all MSSD students, even if they do not compete as athletes. Students serve as team managers, volunteer as crew members for all home games, help out at the admission table and concession stand, and fill the stands at home games with spirited cheers for the Eagles.

The eagle has served as the school mascot since the school opened in 1969. Majestic and soaring, the eagle represents the abilities of our students and their unlimited potential.



## ■ Homecoming

Our annual Homecoming held each fall brings together current students and alumni to celebrate the Eagle spirit. The weekend features a kick-off pep rally, games, tournaments, a Homecoming party, crowning of the Homecoming Court, and reunion events.



## Year-Round Sports

### FALL

Cheerleading, football, girls volleyball

### WINTER

Boys basketball, girls basketball, cheerleading, wrestling

### SPRING

Baseball, softball, track and field

Teams compete in local leagues and tournaments against schools with similar enrollment sizes. Each year our teams participate in national deaf school tournaments such as the Spike Out volleyball tournament, the Clerc Classic basketball tournament and cheerleading competition, the Hoy baseball and softball tournament, the Berg/Seeger Track & Field Classic, and the Willigan Wrestling Tournament. MSSD also periodically hosts national tournaments.





# We're Saving a Seat for You!

## APPLY NOW

We welcome prospective students and families to attend our Open Houses, fall Homecoming, and student performances.

Visit us online at [www.gallaudet.edu/mssd/admissions.html](http://www.gallaudet.edu/mssd/admissions.html).

## CONTACT

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## HOME OF THE EAGLES!

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