



Division Director Board Report

Upper School

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From the Senior Leaders' Desk

Priscilla Mendez, Upper School Director of Curriculum and Instruction

At the close of the 2018-19 academic year, the staff satisfaction survey results, as well as upper school pulse checks, were top of mind going into the 2019-20 school year. Both faculty and staff had previously shared, through multiple venues, their disappointment with professional development. This specific data point was the impetus for the many changes that occurred during the 2019-20 August Professional Development (PD) schedule outlined below.

Both Ms. Shelburne (middle school DCI) and I worked very closely to ensure cohesion and alignment were not only apparent but also drove school-wide instructional priorities. We also wanted to balance expectations of faculty deliverables with desired student outcomes to ensure the return on investment would be high. These two areas of focus enabled us to plan a very different August PD structure by focusing on:

- session topics that had a direct impact on instruction from day one;
- structures and content that modeled instructional best practices;
- sharing the vision for sessions, as well as their connection to PD, throughout the year;
- tangible outcomes and clear expectations for PD,
- time for implementation and planning; and
- showing the interconnectedness between content areas and skills to allow for more meaningful collaboration among and between faculty across the school.

The first week's theme, culture, safety, and student support, helped set the stage for teaching and learning in practice. The theme of culture, safety and student support were the main focus in order to create a shared understanding of the culture and climate of the Academy. These sessions during Week One set the groundwork for Week Two, which focused on teaching and learning through a collaborative lens. The concept of planning with intention in order to provide a rigorous and relevant educational experience for our Wave-Makers contributed to a school-wide shared vision of teaching and learning.

Each session that had a "product deliverable" as an outcome was followed by dedicated planning time. This ensured faculty were equipped with the time and space necessary to complete deliverables in a collaborative manner. Multiple sessions were also conducted in collaboration between the middle and upper school divisions. Faculty members shared,

- *"I can confidently collaborate to continue vertical alignment practices";*
- *"This session has encouraged me to ask questions of my colleagues";*
- *"It was very helpful to meet as a team, so we could begin to build fellowship with one another and begin our work together";*
- *"I can hear the passion of the staff who are teaching below me. I will allow that to rejuvenate my own passion...";* and
- *"Alignment is great".*

Allowing teachers to learn from their collective genius, tap into the knowledge and experience of their peers, and be cognizant of how their own practice impacts their peers was a very useful and impactful way to spend time.

- *When upper school faculty and staff were asked for their overall August PD impressions, their responses included: "Great PD! Thank you for being responsive and adaptive to the needs of all stakeholders";*
- *"Great job planning DCIs";*
- *"Much better PD this year than the past few years..."*
- *"I've said this multiple times this PD, but things are running so much smoother this year";* and

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- *“Better this year! With some changes could be even better next year.”*

I am excited about the positive buzz August PD has received this year. I am hopeful that with the implementation of feedback from August PD, along with the Friday PD structure and topics, will become a more fruitful learning experience and collaborative space. Immediate changes will provide a balance of content and time for implementation as well as more opportunities for school-wide alignment through walk-throughs and best practice spotlights. Ms. Shelburne and I are committed to learning from this year’s professional development cycles to make next year’s August PD the very best yet!

Start of the Year Reflections

Priscilla Mendez, Upper School Director of Curriculum and Instruction

What?

Upon reflection of the 2018-19 academic year:

- Semester 1 student trends included issues pertaining to trash and bathroom vandalism.
- Mid-year staff satisfaction survey results highlighted a disconnect between upper school faculty and leadership.
- The Semester 2 move to the middle school campus highlighted multiple areas of growth for our students including the improper usage of open learning space. Other social-emotional issues for students surfaced such as incidents of self-harm through cutting.
- Faculty and staff consistently shared the sentiment of the work required of them feeling unsustainable.
- Faculty shared in one-on-one check-in’s with the DCI that instructional priorities felt driven by compliance and were not grounded in student growth or faculty development.

So What?

In response to student trends, survey results, and what faculty and staff shared with the senior leaders, it was decided that a major shift in practice needed to occur. The start of the 2019-20 academic year was a perfect time to re-brand, reset, and re-norm on the expectations and priorities both the students and adults would spend their time focusing on in the upper school.

To that end, the mission and upper school objectives will be carried out with a focus on:

- 1) *campus culture setting*
- 2) *rigorous and relevant instruction*
- 3) *sustainability*

In practice, the faculty and staff spent an entire week of August PD focusing on campus culture setting. Routines, expectations, and procedures (REPs) for our new upper school campus were unveiled, discussed, and practiced. This week-long endeavor intentionally created the space and time to norm on what a safe and effective learning environment will look like on our new campus. Faculty members were able to brainstorm and begin creating community agreements to build a strong classroom culture that aligns to the overall campus culture.

Week Two of August PD set the groundwork for a year-long focus on rigorous and relevant instruction. In order to move from compliance to excellence the vision must be clear, expectations must be explicit, and the process must be implemented by all with fidelity. Teachers grappled with their piece of the puzzle, how what they teach impacts and relies on what came before and what comes after them. Tapping into prior and future learning are integral when planning their curriculum and instruction for the year. The teaching and learning cycle will continue to inform the work that is done throughout the academic year.

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Lastly, sustainability was top of mind. It is well known that burnout causes discontent, depression, and turnover. In order to proactively mitigate this, built-in time to complete deliverables was enacted to create space within the work day to complete deliverables. Additionally, addressing the notion of the “ideal” or “perfection” is integral for this work to feel sustainable. The more the work that needs to be completed is chunked into manageable pieces, is presented in a way that connects it to larger initiatives, and is able to be completed in collaboration with other subject-matter experts (their peers), the more we will be able to support sustainability and success.

Now What?

In order to track our continued progress towards goals, multiple metrics will be considered in order to measure success. It will no longer be enough to “check the box”, but rather the work must be evaluated in order to gauge whether progress is being made. The following data will be utilized to assess progress:

- student survey data
- family and guardian survey data
- faculty and staff survey data
- classroom observations
- dean referrals
- grade point average data

The Board is encouraged to offer other avenues for support, improvement, or implementation.

Departmental Priorities, Dean of Students

Ahjia D. Moore, Upper School Dean of Students

What?

- In partnership with the Middle School Deans of Students (DOS) and Operations Team, the arrival and dismissal procedures have been relaunched to ensure traffic student safety remains at the forefront of priorities on our newly expanded campus.
- Supervision duty, as a whole, has been relaunched on the upper school campus. All staff and faculty are expected to perform a minimum of 90 minutes per week of supervision duties, which includes arrival duty, dismissal duty, and campus supervision duty.
- The Deans of Students led and implemented designated programming, called “The Big Splash”, during the first week of school with a focus on establishing strong upper school culture. The Deans of Students office anticipated prioritizing student safety given the expanded physical space to account for and supervise.

So What?

Overall, the arrival and dismissal procedures relaunch has been relatively smooth. The DOS and Operations have partnered in sharing out information about new drop-off and pick-up procedures through multiple modes of communication to families and students. During the first week of the arrival and dismissal procedure relaunch, a car, unfortunately, struck one of our students as they crossed an intersection between the middle school and upper school drive loop. The supervision team in the area responded swiftly and appropriately to assess the scene for safety and care for the student. In response to this incident, immediate adjustments have already been made to arrival and dismissal responsibilities and are effective immediately. No similar incidents have occurred or are anticipated to occur as a result of the adjustments.

In an effort to support a larger campus and supporting a larger work culture that practices sustainability, the DOS has co-created and managed a rotating supervision schedule comprised of all MWA staff and faculty. The goal of supervision for the year is to provide clear and immediate adult presence during student transition times (I.e. before and after school, break periods, lunch periods, and passing periods).

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The DOS is in its fourth year of implementing The Big Splash presentation series as a first week back tradition all classrooms and advisories observe. The Big Splash was designed to create an opportunity for students and staff to set up a strong foundation for positive classroom and campus culture through engaging in activities that build relationships, as well as review all upper school policies, procedures, and expectations in direct connection to the MWA mission and individual students' Life Dreams. During The Big Splash week, all advisories also engage in their first Community Circle and each classroom creates a "Community Agreement" (see *Figure 1 and Figure 2*). Community Agreements have been designed to serve as the foundation for all student-to-faculty interactions and restorative conversations in every upper school classroom. In lieu of the move, the first day of The Big Splash was dedicated to reviewing whole-school review and exploration of the new campus space. In designated periods, faculty and leaders presented on "zones" – designated areas in the upper school where students can look at the color and immediately know what specific expectations they will be held to.

In direct response to 2018-2019's suspension data, where the leading cause was "Possession, Use, Sale, or Furnishing a Controlled Substance", the DOS has strategically focused on behavior intervention and prevention through:

- increased campus supervision during all student transition times
- scheduled parent/guardian programming
- targeted student programming

Implemented together as a set of proactive and preventative strategies, we aim to prevent drug-related incidents from occurring on the larger campus. In partnership with the Upper School Social Worker, the DOS is piloting a young men's group with a focus on meeting the social and emotional needs of students who struggle with practicing healthy coping mechanisms, making connections amongst peers, or have a history of receiving DOS support services. This year's attendance has been highest ever of the last four years-with single digit absences only. We attribute some of this to students feeling more connected to their community and not wanting to miss out on all the activities and opportunities the new campus has to offer (see *Figure 3*).

Figures 1 and 2: The Big Splash Overview and First Week Schedule

The Big Splash Overview



- **Build Community**

- Build relationships through getting to know one another
- Building cohesion and alignment between MS and US (“We are one school.”)

- **Set students and staff up for success**

- Focus on school **culture**, review individual and community **expectations**
- *Breakdown* of Upper School policies and procedures; practice
- *Breakdown* of classroom expectations, co-creation of **Community Agreements**

- **Connect us closer to our mission**

- Draw **relevant**, direct connections to societal expectations *outside of MWA*
- Mindset check. *Why are we here? What is our responsibility to give back and “recycle our success”?*



The Big Splash Overview



Day 1

All Periods:

- Staff Introductions
- Routine, Expectations, and Procedures (REPS)

Advisory: 9th-12th Locker Distribution

Day 2

Periods 1, 3, and 5:

- US Policy And Procedures Review
- Teambuilding

Periods 2, 4, and 6:

- Community Agreements and Classroom Expectations
- Syllabus Overview

***Advisory: Adventure Trip Roll-out**

Day 3

Periods 1, 3, and 5:

- Community Agreements and Classroom Expectations
- Syllabus Overview

Periods 2, 4, and 6:

- US Policy And Procedures Review
- Teambuilding

Advisory: Community Circle



Implementation of The Big Splash has helped us launch a strong year. We can tell that there has been a positive impact in terms of how students are acclimating in their various learning spaces, and that The Big Splash is working for us in this area.

Figure 3: First Day of School Attendance Year Comparison

<i>Year</i>	<i># Absent</i>
<i>2019</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>2018</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>2017</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>2016</i>	<i>18</i>

Now What?

In regards to campus safety, the DOS will continue to monitor the arrival and dismissal procedures to ensure students and families have a safe and time-efficient experience on campus. The DOS will also continue to monitor and support the staff facilitation of supervision duties to support a safe campus culture and deter poor decision-making. The metrics we will track will include:

- Lowering the incidents of referrals due to possessing illegal substances
- Increasing or meeting attendance goals of 97%
- Positive culture metrics related to the Big Splash, including school connectedness

Departmental Priorities, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Priscilla Mendez, Upper School Director of Curriculum and Instruction

What?

- Math continues to be an area of focus in the upper school.
- A July resignation of the Precalculus and AP Calculus teacher has currently left us with no live instruction options for Precalculus.
- We were able to identify and hire a part-time and experienced teacher to teach AP Calculus
- Current vacancies include a Precalculus teacher and Math Coach.
- Due to recent news of a resignation, we are expecting a vacancy for English II beginning September 16, 2019.

So What?

There are currently four seniors who have exhausted all math courses we currently offer with the exception of AP Calculus. Therefore, an AP Calculus teacher hire was paramount for those students to remain college competitive, as well as for the upper school to meet its objectives for math efficacy. The Talent Team did their due diligence and re-screened previously interviewed candidates for multiple Math positions. Due to their thoroughness and a change in an applicant credential status we have hired a part-time AP Calculus teacher that will provide live instruction one period a day to a specific cohort of students who have opted into the class.

The leadership team discussed the multiple platforms that can be utilized to provide Precalculus instruction to our Wave-Makers. Apex Learning Precalculus was chosen based on three factors:

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- user experience
- subject matter accessibility
- cost-benefit analysis

Based on user experiences shared by faculty, staff, and students Apex Learning was opted for over Laurel Springs. Concerning subject matter accessibility, Laurel Springs representatives recommended MWA use a different platform based on their curriculum being geared towards the highest achieving students and emphasized Laurel Springs should not be utilized for general math instruction. Lastly, the cost-benefit analysis of utilizing Apex Learning over Laurel Springs supported the decision to choose Apex Learning.

Now What?

While the search for a highly qualified Precalculus teacher continues, Apex Learning Precalculus will be implemented by a full-time, credentialed online learning instructor who has over ten years of teaching experience. When a Precalculus teacher is identified and hired, we will transition students accordingly. In the meantime, we will also search for an external tutor in order to provide instructional support during core day instruction.

The search for a highly qualified Math Coach who can provide consistent and aligned support for the Math department to include: Common Core knowledge and standards alignment, lesson and unit planning, modeling, co-teaching, small group instruction, as well as high leverage instructional practices and strategies continues.

As Math is an area of focus, the following data will be utilized to track math achievement improvement:

- Math Diagnostic Testing Project (MDTP)
- Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Blocks (IAB)
- Grade point average (GPA)
- Springboard embedded assessment (EA)

The Board is encouraged to provide recommendations for how to proceed with Math vacancies in the future. Additionally, we ask the board to consider expanding funds to allocate hiring additional Math teachers to avoid future vacancies in this high turnover, hard to fill subject.

Departmental Priorities, College and Career Counseling

Jon Siapno, Director of College and Career Counseling

What?

- Cliff Adelman, a Department of Education researcher, has found that, “A rigorous high school curriculum has greater impact on bachelor’s degree completion than any other pre-college indicator of academic preparation, regardless of socioeconomic status or race.”¹
- While there is no universally-accepted definition of academic preparation for college, the A-G curriculum (the sequence of 15 required and 3 recommended courses students must complete in order to meet minimum eligibility requirements for admission to California State University and University of California) serves as a benchmark of rigor for college readiness in our state.²
- At the end of the 2017-18 school year in Contra Costa County, only 31% of Black or African American graduates

¹ Clifford Adelman, “Answers in the tool box: Academic intensity, attendance patterns, and bachelor’s degree attainment,” Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1999.

² William Bedsworth et al, “Reclaiming the American dream,” Boston: The Bridgespan Group, 2006.

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and 40% of Latino or Hispanic graduates completed the A-G curriculum.³

So What?

Making Waves Academy continues its commitment to college readiness by offering a guaranteed and viable master schedule that allows all students to complete the A-G curriculum -- the sequence of courses to which our Upper School graduation requirements are aligned. The course offerings for this year feature several enhancements from the prior year, meant to affirm our commitment to A-G curriculum completion and college readiness, while building upon our continuing efforts to increase the competitive advantage of our graduates.

For the 2019-20 school year, we have dissolved Honors English III and are now offering AP English Language and Composition as an advanced level alternative to English III for juniors. We have expanded our offerings in Visual and Performing Arts with the return of Advanced Art and the addition of Introduction to Drama. Our Career Technical Education (CTE) pathway in Health Science and Medical Technology for Patient Care has expanded to include Advanced Patient Care as a capstone course. While we continue to offer Spanish II and Spanish III, we have paused our offering of Spanish II Advanced and Spanish III Advanced while we work with our Spanish teachers to strengthen the differentiation between the “regular” and “Advanced” sections of languages other than English. We are now offering AP Spanish Language and Culture as a fourth-year course in our World Languages department.

Three sections of Pre-calculus are being offered to students through Apex Learning, online, in which a full-time employee of Making Waves Academy will be the teacher of record for daily classroom facilitation. We have dissolved Writing and Technology, a ninth grade course which, while teaching requisite skills needed for success in English Language Arts, was not an A-G approved course. The skills taught in Writing and Technology have intentionally carried over into the English I course offered to all ninth grade students. We are not offering AP Biology this year.

Now What?

College and Career Counseling will track metrics aligned to the College and Career Indicator (CCI) from the California School Dashboard, which measures how well local educational agencies and schools are preparing students for likely success after graduation. In particular, we will measure the % of students who are “prepared,” which is defined as:

“Prepared,” as defined by the College and Career Indicator (CCI) from the California School Dashboard

1. Completion of University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) a-g requirements with a grade of C- or better, plus one of the following additional criteria:
 - a. Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment Scores:
 - i. Level 3 or higher on ELA and at least a Level 2 “Standard Nearly Met” in mathematics, or
 - ii. Level 3 or higher on mathematics and at least a Level 2 in ELA
 - b. One semester or two quarters of Dual Enrollment with a grade of C- or better in academic or CTE subjects
 - c. Score of 3 on one AP exam or score of 4 on one IB exam (for a-g- requirement only)
 - d. Completion of CTE Pathway (for a-g- requirement only)

The Board is encouraged to begin its considerations for further enhancements to our 2020-21 course offerings, which will formally begin with the Curriculum Review Advisory Committee meeting, occurring on November 7, 2019.

³ “Four-year cohort graduates meeting University of California/California State University (UC/CSU) course requirements by race/ethnicity,” Sacramento: California Department of Education, 2018.



Course Offering for 2019-20
Making Waves Academy Upper School

A-G and CDE Requirements		Making Waves Academy Course of Study		
<i>Content Areas</i>	<i>Required</i>	<i>Courses Offered for 2019-20</i>	<i>Required</i>	<i>Credits</i>
A. History and Social Science	2 Years	World History United States History** AP United States History United States Government (0.5) AP U.S. Government and Politics (0.5) Economics (0.5)	3 Years*	6.0
B. English	4 Years	English I English II English III** AP English Language and Composition CSU Expository Reading and Writing	4 Years	8.0
C. Mathematics	3 Years	Algebra I Geometry Algebra II Pre-Calculus (Online) AP Statistics AP Calculus AB	3 Years	6.0
D. Laboratory Science	2 Years	Earth and Space Science Biology Modern Physics and Chemistry Introduction to Health Sciences (CTE) Anatomy and Physiology (CTE) Medical Terminology (CTE) Advanced Patient Care (CTE)	2 Years***	4.0
E. Language Other Than English	2 Years	Spanish I Spanish II Spanish III AP Spanish Language and Culture	2 Years	4.0
F. Visual and Performing Arts	1 Year	Fundamentals of Art Ceramics Advanced Art Introduction to Drama	1 Year	2.0
G. College Preparatory Elective	1 Year	AP Psychology	****	****
California Department of Education	2 Years	Health and Wellness I Health and Wellness II	2 Years*	4.0
TOTAL				34.0

Courses listed in "blue" fulfill A-G and MWA graduation requirements. Courses listed in "black" are A-G recommended courses or electives. All courses are year-long and eligible for 1.0 credit towards graduation. Courses indicated as 0.5 are semester-long courses. Career Technical Education (CTE) courses in Health Science and Medical Technology are aligned to California state standards for CTE.

* California Department of Education requires three years of History and two years of Physical Education.

** U.S. History requirement may be fulfilled by AP U.S. History. English III requirement may be fulfilled by AP English Language and Composition.

*** Laboratory Science requirement includes one Life Science and one Physical Science course.

**** College Preparatory Elective for A-G requirements satisfied by third year of History.

