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# Board Report

## Middle and Upper School

## Board Report - February 2020

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### From the Senior School Director's Desk

Dr. E. Ward-Jackson

I am honored to submit my first Board report as the inaugural Senior School Director of Making Waves Academy. At the time of writing this, I have been in the role for 15 days. With intentional planning, a progressive outcomes oriented approach, and significant support, encouragement, and championing from key community stakeholders, I have hit the ground running—making difference, impact, and cultivating excitement for the important work ahead.

On 12/20/19 when our CEO formally re-introduced me to the community, by way of address, I introduced a slogan to our faculty and staff that would represent the focus of my work over the course of the second semester, and ultimately will guide our launch of the upcoming 2020-21 school year, “Scaling Deep for Excellence.” I have designed a designated approach to scaling deep - I will focus inward on restoring the spirit of our upper school community. A division of our school that presently embodies a depressed and disgruntled morale, which is likely a result of having endured much transition, loss, and programmatic inconsistency, while also continuing to engage consistent high expectations and yield a high volume of sustained student outcomes—though the latter seems muddled in the fog of survival. I aim to foster the restoration while simultaneously cultivating a one-school culture across the Academy.

Current industry research on effective change, culture, and excellence suggests that scaling deep is the most effective way to refresh organizations while 1) recommitting stakeholders to their “why,” 2) trusting in organizational changes, and 3) building and uncovering areas of exemplary performance. Although I am less than three weeks in the new role, I have assessed that despite low trust, low morale, and lots of articulated feelings of frustration and discontent, we have a brilliant faculty in the upper school. The majority of our upper school teachers are novice in practice, but they are excited about developing and growing, they are connected to our mission, and they have demonstrated and shared in the core belief of the potential of our Wave-Makers. Ultimately, they seem to be on board with engaging my approach to realizing our CEO’s vision and to ensuring that all of our Wave-Makers will engage the best education experience possible.

Simply put, as the 17<sup>th</sup> Wave (who are now upper school Seniors) would chant when they were young and impressionable 5<sup>th</sup> graders, “REPs are the Roots,” and “We are strong when we are one.” When we scale deep, we reconnect with our foundation and our REPs (Routines, Expectations and Procedures). We refocus on the importance of Relationships in our quest for Rigor, Relevance, and Results (4R’s), and we make intentional steps to connect with each other, to heal wounds, to repair harm, and to focus in on the core elements of our systemic and programmatic frameworks. We allow ourselves permission to pace down, so that when we pick up speed, we are operating at an optimum efficiency level and ultimately a level of excellence, and as an outcome, this becomes the only option.

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Over the next 90 days I have crafted a plan that monitors the following three focus areas:

1. **Upper School Residency:** Physically moving into the Upper School and exercising VAR (Visibility, Accessibility, Responsiveness) for both staff and students
2. **Learning Tour:** Host 1:1 meetings and small group Coffee Klatches for the intent of distilling learnings/findings into themes, and themes in to SMART goals that will guide future work
3. **Building Bridges:** Align middle school, upper school, and school-site operation systems, protocols, and expectations while also creating channels for engagement and sharing

It is premature to share out any specific progress to goals on my focus areas at this time, but I would like to share that all efforts, in alignment with the aforementioned approach, are underway, and a report on successes, challenges, and next steps is forthcoming.

Embedded below, please find a collaborative sharing of our academy-wide articulation of trauma-informed practices, and some details, data, and analysis regarding our GATE and Advanced Placement programming.

### Trauma-Informed Practices (Middle and Upper School)

Student Support Services (Deans of Students and Social Workers)

#### What?

At Making Waves Academy, we utilize a trauma-informed framework that applies universal, targeted, and individual support for all students. Trauma is an experience, or set of experiences, that threatens life or physical integrity and that overwhelms an individual's capacity to cope (National Childhood Traumatic Stress Network). Recent and ongoing data confirms that nearly all students at Making Waves Academy have experienced some form of trauma within their own historically-underserved community.

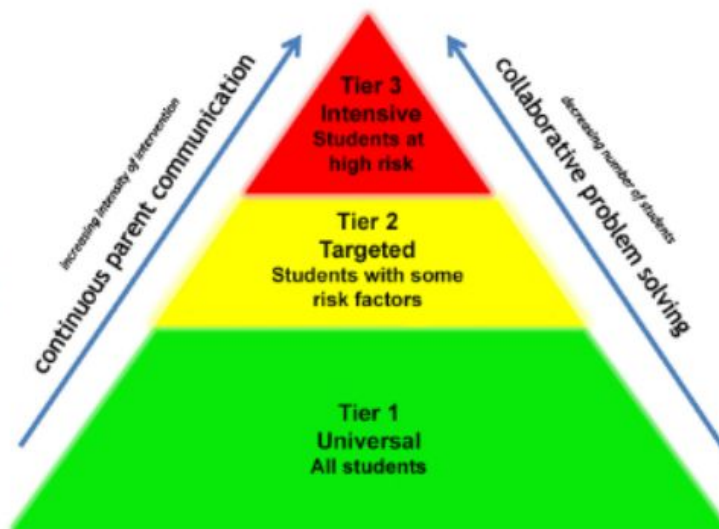
The Student Support Services teams (comprised of the divisional social workers and Deans of Students) strategically align services to apply intervention that facilitates a school culture and climate that is safe, supportive, and promotes academic achievement and social-emotional skills for all students. The Student Support Services Teams spearhead the academy's *proactive and responsive* measures that support the holistic needs of all students-including the effects of being exposed to trauma.

#### Successes

- Offered academy-wide, multi-tiered intervention to all students
- Offered a variety of professional development and workshops for parent/guardians and staff
- Provided opportunity for multi-disciplinary intervention teams to serve students on a daily basis

#### Challenges

- Academy-wide, increase in student referrals for mental health services
  - Growing Student Support Services Teams' services to scale for growing student body
  - Staff vacancies and need for more professional development
- **At MWA we follow a Multi-Tier System of Support framework, providing universal, targeted, and individualized high need services & interventions for both students, faculty and parent/guardians.**



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### MWA Trauma-Informed Practices

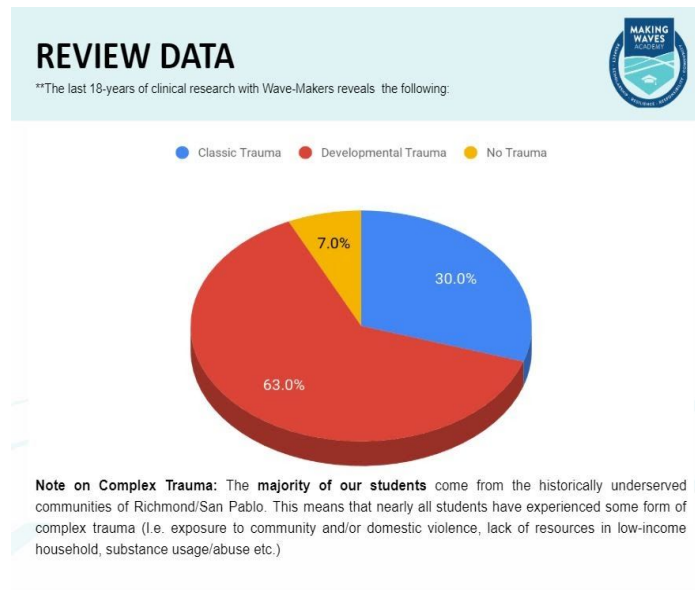
|                      | Universal   | Targeted   | Individual   |
|----------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>School-Wide</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Monthly Parent Meetings</li> <li>● Parent Academy</li> <li>● Parent volunteer opportunities</li> <li>● School Site Council</li> <li>● Parent Wave Representatives</li> <li>● Culture and Climate Surveys</li> <li>● School Emergency Response Team (SERT)</li> <li>● Notice Talk Act</li> <li>● California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS)</li> <li>● Restorative Practices</li> <li>● Self-Care Action Plans</li> <li>● Preparing the Mind for Success and Competition (PMSC)</li> <li>● Life Dream Snapshots for students</li> <li>● Community Building Calendar</li> <li>● Advisory/Homeroom Period</li> <li>● Nutrition policies</li> <li>● Cultural celebrations in Community Building Calendar (Latinx Heritage, Black History Month, Lunar New Year)</li> <li>● Gaggle and Securely Alerts</li> <li>● Professional Development Calendar</li> <li>● Life Dream Snapshots for staff</li> <li>● Director of Diversity and Inclusion Services</li> <li>● Healthcare benefits, including mental health services</li> <li>● Sustainability Friday's</li> <li>● Professional Development Day meal services</li> <li>● Teacher coaching and mentoring</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Black/African American Achievement Initiative</li> <li>● English Language Advisory Committee</li> <li>● Parent/teacher conferences</li> <li>● Crisis Prevention and Response Team (CPRT)</li> <li>● Group Counseling and psycho-therapeutic services</li> <li>● Student-led Conferences</li> <li>● Academic Intervention</li> <li>● On-call classroom management trainings for identified "at promise teachers"</li> <li>● Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee</li> <li>● Culture and Climate Committee</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Risk and Threat Assessments</li> <li>● Clinical evaluations and diagnoses via Social Worker/clinicians</li> <li>● Individual Counseling and psycho-therapeutic services</li> <li>● On-site School Nurse</li> <li>● Referrals to outside agencies (e.g. primary care providers, CFS, mental health care providers and other community partners)</li> <li>● SEL skill development training for identified obstacles to success</li> <li>● Progressive disciplinary model interventions</li> <li>● Community partnerships</li> <li>● Student Support Teams (SST) Plans</li> <li>● Individual Education Plans (IEPs)</li> <li>● Behavior Plans</li> </ul> |
| <b>Middle School</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Calm Corners</li> </ul>  |  |  |
| <b>Upper School</b>  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Coordination of Services Team (COST)</li> </ul>   |  |

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### So What?

People who have suffered emotional trauma can have lapses in their cognitive abilities such as; increased anxiety, difficulties with memory function, difficulty regulating emotions, and challenges with building healthy relationships.

Data shows that more than half of all U.S. children have experienced some kind of trauma in the form of abuse, neglect, violence or challenging household circumstances (The Center for Disease Control). These childhood experiences have impacts that extend far beyond childhood, including higher risks for alcoholism, suicide, and other health problems. In comparison, 93% of MWA students have been identified with previous or ongoing experiences of classic and/or developmental trauma.



Staff observe the impact of student trauma in the following classroom behaviors: anxiety, fear, and concerns for safety of self and others, decreased attention and/or concentration, changes in activity level, change in academic performance, irritability, angry outbursts and/or aggression, withdrawal from others or activities, absenteeism, re-experiencing the trauma (e.g. nightmares or disturbing memories during the day), hyperarousal (e.g. easily startled), avoidance behaviors (e.g. resisting going to places that remind them of the event), emotional numbing (e.g. seeming to have no feeling or interest about the event). It is important to note that students who have experienced traumatic events may display these aforementioned behavioral or academic problems, or their suffering may not be apparent at all.

Essentially, when students are experiencing the impacts of trauma they are unable to learn and often disrupt or prevent the learning of others from occurring.

### Now What?

Next steps for the Student Support Services Teams are to continue to engage in ongoing collaboration and alignment of best practices including: school-wide policies and protocols, interventions and referral processes essential to elements of our trauma-informed school system. The Student Support Services Teams will seek increased opportunities for staff sustainability through additional trainings/workshops, as well as advocating for intentional time embedded for self-care and access to external health services (e.g. mental health, holistic services). Both division departments are in the process of identifying community partnerships that could further address stakeholder needs, create/enhance developmentally appropriate interventions, and consistently implement our multi-tiered support system with fidelity.



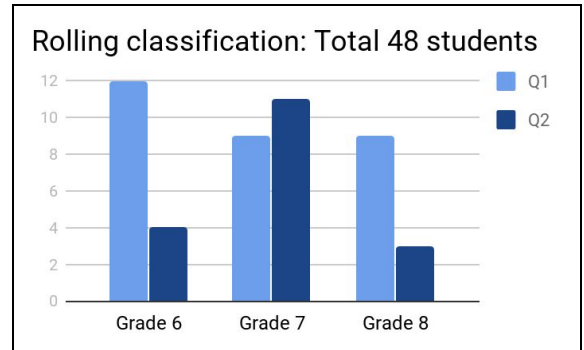
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## GATE (Middle School)

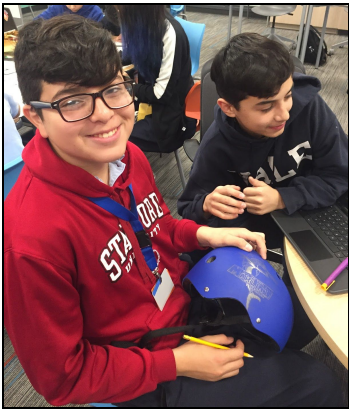
Kelly Le, GATE Coordinator

### What?

- **Context:** We are in year 3 of our 4 year implementation plan. As stated in a previous report to the board, this means that we have rolled out GATE Programming to Grades 6, 7 and 8 and onboarded a GATE Teacher, Mr. Howard McCoy. Additionally, Gate roster for rising 6th grade will be completed in Quarter 4.



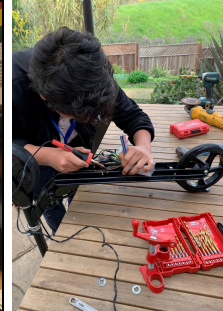
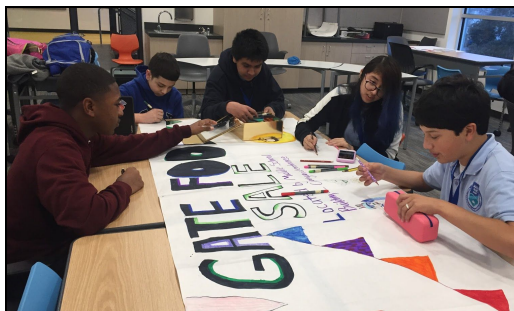
- **Successes:**



- Successful collaborations between GATE teachers resulted in dynamic PBL curriculum and seamless, rolling-basis classification process.
- GATE program continues to be driven by student’s interests. Case in point, two fundraising proposals for CloseUp trip were submitted. The first is an afterschool food sale and second is a silent auction for an electric scooter, which students are designing and building.
- The focus for GATE Saturday Academy is civic debate and problem solving projects (ie: Exploravision and Rube Goldberg machines). We hosted 1 out of 3 sessions and are planning study trips for the last two.
- To generate excitement and interests around the launch of the GATE Advisory Commitment (2020-2021), we hosted an academy-wide workshop for staff and are preparing for a Saturday Parent Meeting session for families.

### Challenges:

- Continue to work on “zero period” logistics to meet operational and instructional requirements.
- With increased enrollment, study trips are limited due to budgetary restraints.
- Coordinator’s time constraints in setting up system to mentor, track and support students who are nearly met.



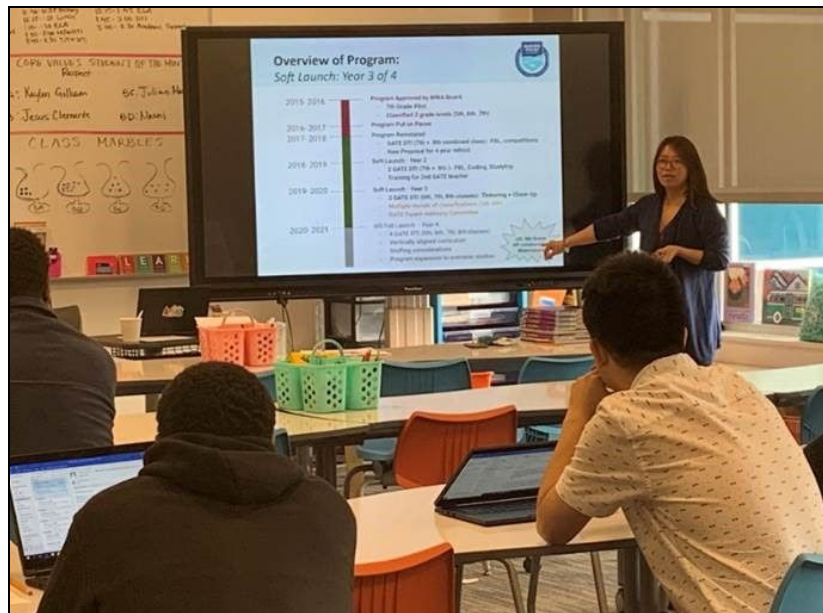
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### So What?

- In reflecting on our progress and current challenges, we are pleased with our progress and achievement in:
  - Adapting to needs that arose and problem solving around multiple bell schedules.
  - Focusing our efforts to ensure that the program is paced for success by researching effective GATE/STEM-based programs in the Bay areas such as our site visit to Quarry Lane School in Dublin with board member, Burak Gursel.

### Now What?

- We are in the process of planning the launch of the GATE Parent Advisory Committee.
- Strengthening protocols and procedures for classification criteria:
  - Curriculum: Enstating a rubric for vertically aligned writing samples and portfolio samples with US and MS teachers
  - Collaborating with EL coordinator to ensure EL's learning profiles are highlighted in the classification process.
- Build capacity in our faculty to become GATE Certified teachers to eventually serve 4th-9th Grade.
- Start tracking the impact of the GATE Program on behavior and academic progress.
- Build out robotics aspect of the program: training teachers and involving parents and students.





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### AP/Honors (Upper School)

Jon Siapno, Director of College and Career Counseling  
Atieris Adams, College and Career Counseling Coordinator  
Michelle Chan, Academic Advising Coordinator

#### What?

- The 2018-19 academic year saw the highest enrollment of Advanced Placement (AP) scholars, with 140 students participating in the AP program, compared to 37 in the 2014-15 academic year, the first year that AP courses were offered at Making Waves Academy.
- More than 90.0% of single-year seniors from the current academic year have taken at least one AP course at some point during their time at Making Waves Academy, thus exposing them to college-level rigor.
- Across our AP program, however, a large number of AP scholars are not passing their exams with a score of 3 or higher, despite earning passing grades in their corresponding courses.
- That said, the May 2019 exam administration yielded the highest share of students earning a passing score of 3 or higher compared to prior years at 33.6% across all AP subjects, with 95% of students taking the AP Spanish Language and Culture exam earning a passing score of 3 or higher.

#### SCHOOL SUMMARY

|                                       | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Total AP Students                     | 37   | 91   | 82   | 104  | 140  |
| Number of Exams                       | 37   | 131  | 144  | 158  | 231  |
| AP Students with Scores 3+            | 1    | 23   | 19   | 28   | 47   |
| % of Total AP Students with Scores 3+ | 2.7  | 25.3 | 23.2 | 26.9 | 33.6 |

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### So What?

According to a report by The Bridgespan Group<sup>1</sup>, “academic preparation is critical to increasing the odds that students will graduate from high school and attain college degrees.” Among other findings, the report articulates that there is a significant beneficial effect to increasing the rates of college matriculation and completion among low-income youth when 1) a student expects to take a college-prep high school curriculum, and 2) a counselor helps with the choice of high school curriculum.

Our approach to academic preparation and student scheduling is aligned to the findings of the Bridgespan report, and extends those best practices into the recruitment and enrollment practices of our AP program, which offers students exposure to college-level rigor.

Additionally, in alignment with access and equity expectations set forth in the annual United States Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection, enrollment via self-selection by students is permitted for all AP courses at Making Waves Academy, without needing a recommendation or meeting any other criteria, except any necessary prerequisites. Our “open access” enrollment policy is a primary driver for the increases in AP program participation we have seen over the last few years. That said, if our current faculty size and course offering remain the same for upcoming school year, we can expect that student enrollment in our AP program will remain largely the same as this year.

While the “open access” enrollment policy for our AP program has succeeded in driving-up increases in student participation, the success of our “no opt-out” exam policy is worth examining.

Our current AP exam policy articulates that AP scholars are expected to take the AP exam for each corresponding AP course for which they are enrolled. Since the start of the AP program, Making Waves has ordered and administered all AP exams for each AP course taken by each student at no cost to families. While this practice succeeds in ensuring that all participants in the AP program can access the AP exam at no cost<sup>2</sup>, the pattern that we have observed over the last three years is that approximately 70.0% of test takers do not pass the exam with a 3 or higher<sup>3</sup>. The value of our AP program, however, extends beyond a student’s ability to receive a passing score on the exam -- the exposure to college-level rigor over the duration of the course is worthwhile and arguably helpful for a student’s transition from high school to college. All students currently enrolled in an AP course have already been registered to take the corresponding AP exam this spring<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Joe Doctor, Susan J. Colby, and William Bedsworth, “Reclaiming the American Dream,” San Francisco: The Bridgespan Group, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> The full price per student for each AP exam is \$94, plus additional exam administration fees charged by some schools. Students with financial hardship, and those on free or reduced price lunch, may be eligible for fee reductions. The number of fee reductions afforded to each school by the College Board varies from year to year, and may or may not cover the full number of students who qualify as eligible. Making Waves Academy offers AP exams at no cost to students and families.

<sup>3</sup> In collaboration with the Spanish department, College and Career Counseling conducted a survey of Spanish II and Spanish III students interested in taking the AP Spanish Language and Culture exam at the end of the 2018-19 academic year. Although we did not yet offer the course, survey data indicated that 108 students were interested in taking the AP exam. We piloted the exam last spring by creating a mock language lab for 19 students. The results were outstanding at 95% passing with a 3 or higher.

<sup>4</sup> This year, the College Board changed their AP exam policies to reflect the following: 1) an earlier exam registration deadline in November rather than March; 2) a student requirement to set up individual College Board accounts to opt-in to AP tests; and 3) a fee was introduced for children and families who miss the exam on test day. Over the last two years there has been an increase in Wave-Makers wanting to opt-out of the exam. Anecdotally, an increased number of AP scholars have expressed disinterest in taking AP exams for fear of failure or fees for not testing.

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### **Now What?**

College and Career Counseling plans to continue our recruiting efforts by carrying out key activities that promote student enrollment in the AP program.

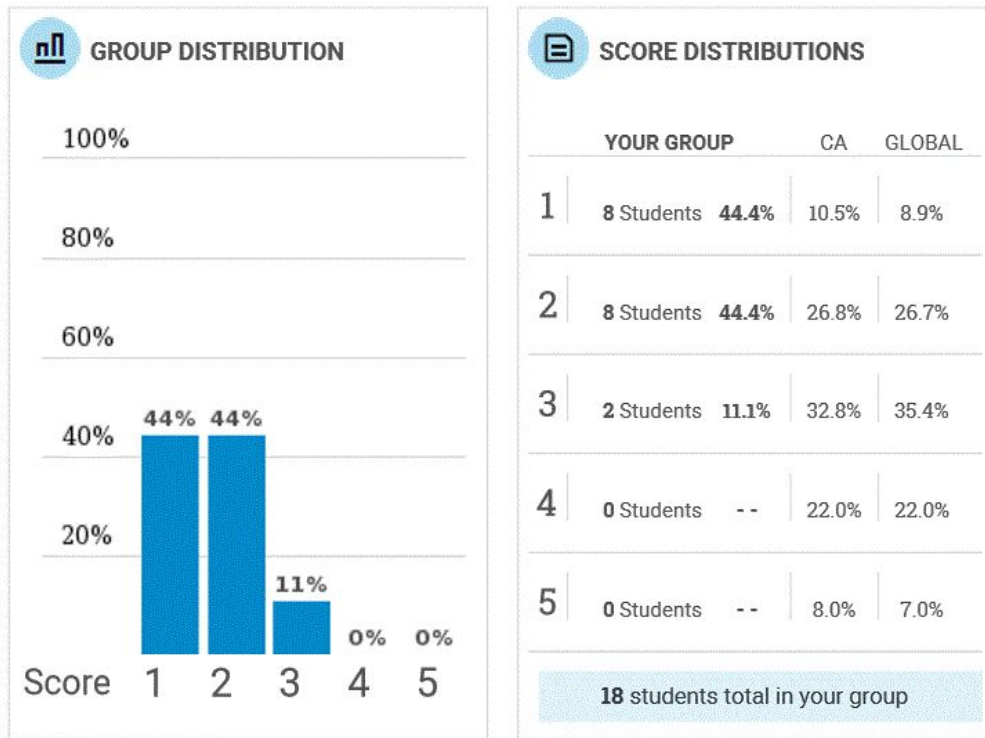
Throughout the academic year, College and Career Counseling collaborates with advisors, faculty, and staff to support and motivate student interest in exploring courses of college-rigor through our AP courses. The annual “Student Interest Survey” launched this October to gauge student interest in current and potential future course offerings. The survey is primarily used to advertise our current course offerings, but offers the opportunity for students to make recommendations for future courses they would like to take at Making Waves Academy. For example, the “Student Interest Survey” from 2018-19, along with feedback from faculty and staff, helped us test interest and expand our course offerings to include AP Spanish and AP English Language and Composition for the 2019-20 academic year.

In addition to the “Student Interest Survey,” information for AP course opportunities are presented to the upper school community by way of “AP Showcase” assemblies, an “AP Showcase” broadcast, and a student-led Q&A panel where students had the opportunity to hear from other students who have, or are currently taking, AP classes. Our course offering was also advertised through presentations to parents and guardians at events such as “Chat & Chews,” Course Selection Forms, and an online course catalog. College and Career Counseling, together with advisors, provide one-on-one and small group counseling to students in selecting AP courses that are aligned to their college and career aspirations and life-dream interests.

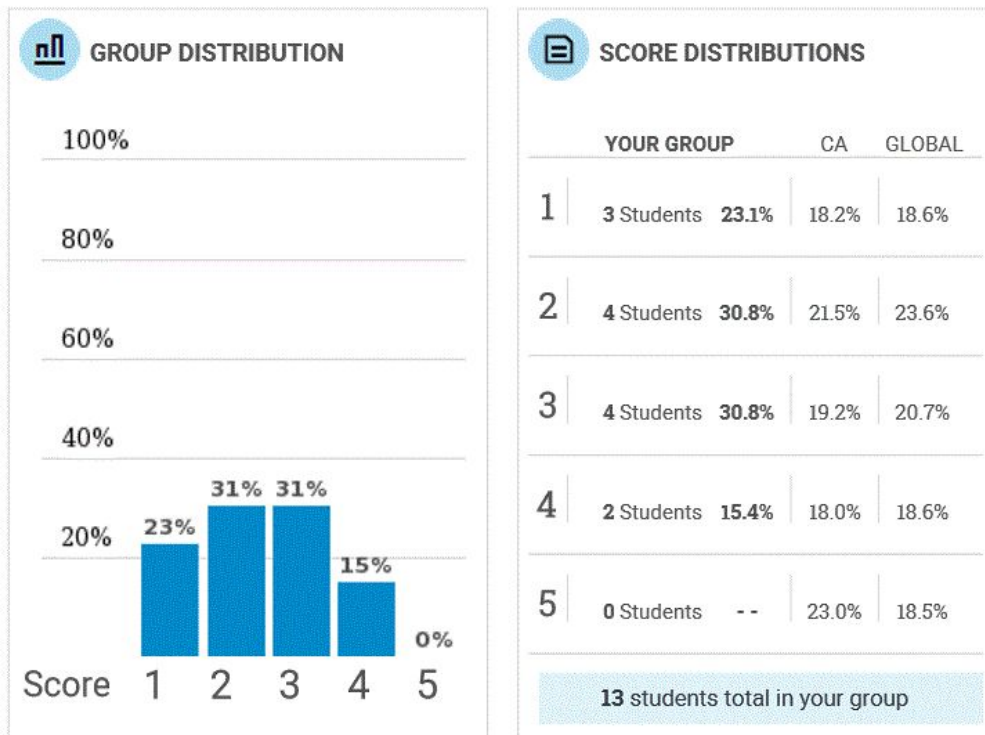
In an effort to increase the share of students who pass their AP exams with scores of 3 or higher, College and Career Counseling plans to convene with faculty and students to learn more about the barriers that prevent our AP scholars from passing their AP exams.

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### AP Biology Score Distribution for AY 2018-19

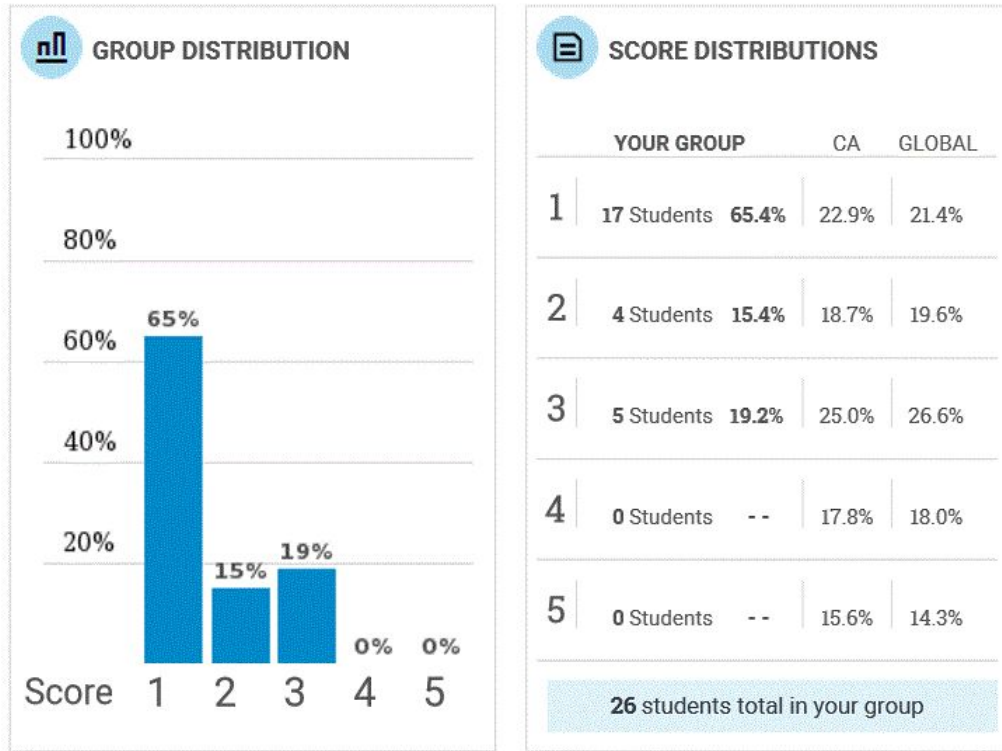


### AP Calculus AB Score Distribution for AY 2018-19

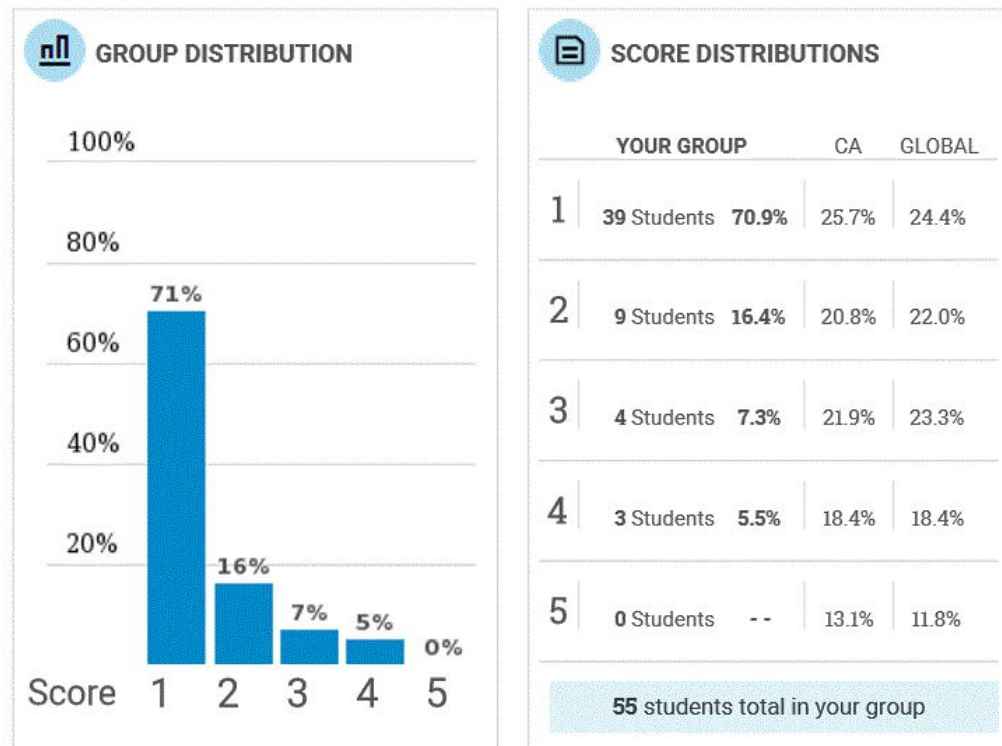


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### AP Statistics Score Distribution for AY 2018-19

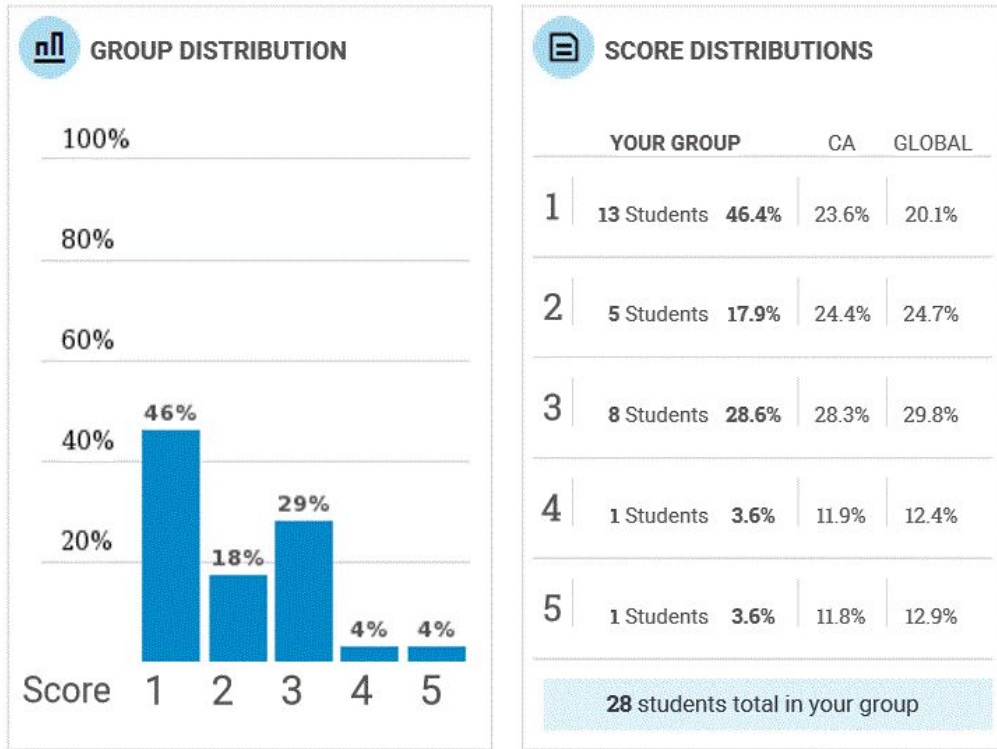


### AP United States History Score Distribution for AY 2018-19

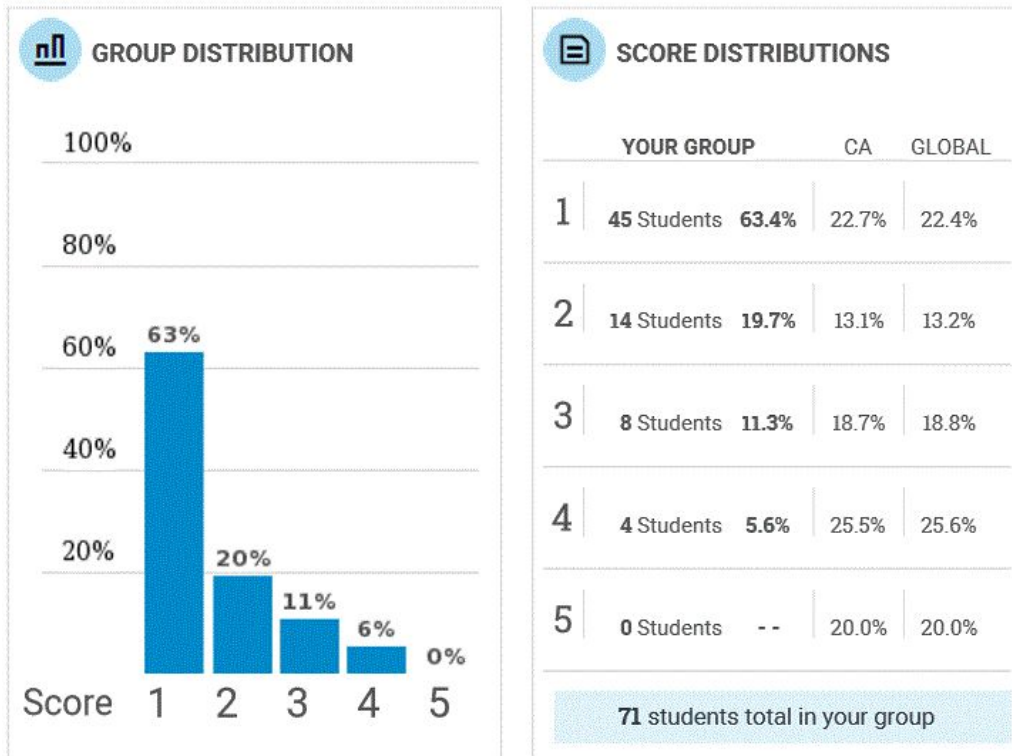


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### AP United States Government and Politics Score Distribution for AY 2018-19



### AP Psychology Score Distribution for AY 2018-19





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### AP Spanish Language and Culture Score Distribution for AY 2018-19

