



Board Report

Middle and Upper School

Board Report - May 2020

From the Senior School Director's Desk

Dr. E. Ward-Jackson

As the 2019-2020 school year comes to a close, I am reflective of just how resilient we are as a community. This has truly been a year like none other. Within one school year we 1) moved into our new upper school side of the campus, 2) fully occupied our middle school buildings, 2) commenced our first year providing in-house SPED programming, 3) completed a WASC review cycle and submitted a self-study for a new WASC cycle, 4) adopted a new org structure that launched a one school leader model, and 5) closed our campus doors for day to day instruction, as a response to the outbreak of a global pandemic. In a year that balanced significant change and transition with buoyed high expectations and accountability, I had both a front row view, and a critical participatory role in ensuring that we would not only manage the change and challenges, but also thrive, be refined, and persevere through the welcomed and necessary impacts of change management and growth. At the sighting of what may appear to be insurmountable, I trust the collective force that we generate as Wave-Makers to persevere, and this has held true as not only our school, but the entire world took on responding to the ever present crisis of COVID-19.

Due to early and intentional planning by our Executive Leadership team and our Crisis Prevention and Response Team (CPRT), we were able to successfully transition our school to a virtual academy within 48 business hours of the school closing. Week 1 we implemented our Continuity of Teaching & Learning plan, and by Week 2 we had started implementation of our Student Support Services plan. Over 4 weeks in advance of surrounding public schools, Making Waves Academy never had a gap in instruction and support for our Wave-Makers. Guided by our mission statement and our affirmation, it was important for me to lead our school in such a way that realized our commitment to *holistically and rigorously prepare our students* and to *not let anything get in the ways of our success*. In a time of uncertainty, fear, altered routines, grief, and an unstable economy, it is important to lead with hope and inspiration, but it is also important to lead realistically, flexibly, and with increased communication. We have learned a lot during this season, and we continue to learn. We have also modeled the way for many schools in this season, and we will continue to be an example of our core values personified.

In this Board Report, you will read about our successes, challenges and next steps in distance learning, in student support, and in how we respond to the needs of our families. As you read below please consider: The extent to which we are able to properly serve our students and families during this time, is due in great part to the timely prioritization and action of our CEO and Board toward ensuring our Wave-Makers are equip with 1:1 Chromebooks, digital textbooks, and learning management systems. My core objective as a School Leader is to protect the atmosphere of rigor, relevance, results, and relationships by leading with my head, heart, and hand, all in an effort to ensure every student has the opportunity to engage the best educational experience possible. I am not sure that anything can replace the experience of learning in the physical classroom, but until we are able to do so again, I can say with confidence that we are well equipped with the necessary tools to give our students the best education possible considering the current limitations and circumstances associated with the pandemic response.

We are excited about the upcoming virtual 8th grade promotion, 12th grade graduation, and Summer Academy plans that by the time of our Board meeting would have been shared broadly. And we appreciate the patience and trust of our Board and of the greater community as we continue to plan and implement plans while being responsive to shifts and changes as they surface.

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Distance Learning (School-Wide)

Caitlin Shelburne and Priscilla Mendez

What?

Successes

- Teachers across the school have had an aligned experience as it pertains to:
 - Expectations such as due dates, quality of work, teacher leader roles during distance learning and communication structures
 - Professional development
 - Cadence of support from DCIs
- 100% of faculty academy-wide have continued to meet expectations for distance learning including: expectations for uploading content to Google Classroom/Canvas, submitting learning materials for paper packets on time, and updating the distance learning tracker as agreed upon.
- Teachers continue to share that communication amongst grade levels and content teams continue to be stronger than ever.
- The camera feature has allowed for fun, engaging and effective learning activities such as: online synchronous zoom workouts, a karaoke competition, real time check for understandings, partner reading, science mini labs, student conferences, screen sharing, and math talks.
- Our tracking system has allowed for strong communication between families, interventionists, teachers, and leadership. The community has used this system with high fidelity.
- Teachers have worked collectively to pace down on the volume of work to ensure that the workload between classes is equitable. Teachers are working to focus on major work standards to ensure depth and effectiveness of learning.

Challenges

- The school-wide average GPA has dropped .38 points since the start of distance learning.
- Some students still have internet connectivity issues, and not all identified students are completing paper packets.

So What:

To expand on the above challenges, we have analyzed our data and have come to some conclusions that will propel our work forward. Several factors have impacted student grades:

- Packet Learning: Student grades from packet learning have been lower than the grades of students online
- Technology: A number of students have experienced spotty internet and chromebook issues which has interrupted their access to learning. As a result of a unique learning schedule and factors related to technology, a number of the lower grades are impacted by missing assignments, rather than low performance
- Teacher Growth and Development: While all teachers were aligned with the level of and types of support expected of them to effectively deliver distance learning, we did not set clear expectations for the amount of and type of work each class was to assign. At the onset of distance learning, teachers were oftentimes misaligned in the quantity of work they assigned to students. We presume that this led to higher participation in some classes than others and an influx in missing assignments.

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<p style="text-align: center;">Middle School Social Studies/History (Social Studies 5, History 6-8)</p> <p>Grades Distribution as of 5.11.20</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr><th>Grade</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> <tr><td>A-C</td><td>65.2%</td></tr> <tr><td>F</td><td>34.8%</td></tr> </table>	Grade	Percentage	A-C	65.2%	F	34.8%	<p style="text-align: center;">Upper School Social Sciences (World History, US History, AP US History, Economics, AP Government, AP Psychology)</p> <p>Grades Distribution As Of 5.11.20</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr><th>Grade</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> <tr><td>A-C</td><td>73.6%</td></tr> <tr><td>F</td><td>26.4%</td></tr> </table>	Grade	Percentage	A-C	73.6%	F	26.4%
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<p>Middle School Encore (Art, Music and Technology)</p> <p>Grade Distribution as of 5.11.20</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr><th>Grade</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> <tr><td>F</td><td>39.6%</td></tr> <tr><td>A-C</td><td>60.4%</td></tr> </table>	Grade	Percentage	F	39.6%	A-C	60.4%	<p>Upper School Visual & Performing Arts (Fundamentals of Art, Advanced Art, Ceramics, Introduction to Drama)</p> <p>Grades Distribution As of 5.11.20</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr><th>Grade</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> <tr><td>F</td><td>29.5%</td></tr> <tr><td>A-C</td><td>70.5%</td></tr> </table>	Grade	Percentage	F	29.5%	A-C	70.5%
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Now What

- Our focus for the end of the year is supporting subject matter mastery and work completion. We have decided to implement a number of structural and programmatic features to support this effort.

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1. Pause on New Instruction Days: We have planned 6 days in the month of May devoted to makeup work and office hours. These days were planned with the intention to give students a chance to catch up. This decision was rooted in equity considering the high number of chromebook and internet issues that interrupted student learning.
2. Data Talks: In upcoming professional development teachers will unpack GPA data with the lens of student critical needs groups, impact of specific practices on student achievement and high level trends. The intention of these sessions are rooted in understanding and emphasizing practices that translate to high student achievement with the hopes of improving our instruction this year and to standardize best practices for the upcoming school year.
3. Clear Expectations for Work: Teachers have been asked to reduce the number of assignments they are assigning to students, while maintaining high rigor and accountability. In the Middle School teachers are now assigning 1-2 assignments per week and the Upper School has reduced the minimum number of assignments by 20% for Semester 2. We have also worked with Content Leads to identify the major standards for Semester 2 to ensure the content is aligned with the work students must know to enter the next grade level.

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Socio-Emotional Learning (School-wide)

Student Support Services Department - Ahjia Moore and Brandon Greene: US/MS Senior Dean of Students; Rachel Navarro and Danilo Garcia: US/MS Social Worker

What?

Successes

- Establishing process to ensure seamless continuation of support for our most vulnerable students via Telemental Health Services
 - Collaborated with our clinical services provider and legal counsel to implement legal and ethical best practices for Telemental Health Services including consent, access, and platform for the delivery of service
 - Identified students with critical psychological and social-emotional needs to prioritize supports for Telemental Health Services and ongoing case management
- Supporting our MWA community to have access to local resources and programs
 - Compiled resources to address MWA community needs resulting from school closure due to COVID-19, including strategies to support learning at home, social-emotional wellness, community and crisis supports
 - Created and promoted an *Information Resource Guide* on our MWA website, school-wide ATM and SchoolMint messaging, and through critical needs outreach directly to families and students
- Establishing process for identifying students not connected to distance learning
 - Comprehensively reviewing distance learning participation tracking data and metrics
 - Engaging in direct outreach to all families of students who are not engaging in distance learning activities, troubleshooting obstacles to participation, and connecting families with requested resources
- Engaging outreach plan to improve distance learning participation rates
 - Weekly monitoring of student participation; weekly calls homes to students and families by Student Support Services Team and advisors
 - Ongoing outreach to our most vulnerable students (presenting with two or more of the following indicators: chronically absent prior to campus closure, multiple suspensions, intensive clinical needs, cumulative GPAs below 2.0, and/or low distance learning participation)
- Delivering divisional Student Support Service PDs for faculty reviewing distance learning supports and resources for students, teachers, and families while highlighting our outreach efforts to improve distance learning participation
- Supporting the development and administration of a parent/guardian survey to gauge the impact of the pandemic on MWA families and to identify areas for future support for MWA families

Challenges

- Increase in student referrals for mental health services due to anxiety or stress-related issues
- Supporting students who were non-communicative or without reliable internet during the majority of the school closure
- Supporting overwhelmed guardians reaching out for support around: chromebook support, questions related to gradebook, Powerschool access, and student academic progress; reiterating teacher office hours and other available academic support
- Increase in students required to work additional hours outside of the home or expected to support the family by being a resource for childcare, resulting in lower engagement with school work

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Dean of Students (DOS) Aggregate Data and Critical Info

03/13/20 - 05/08/20	Middle School	Upper School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of DOS safety alerts investigated and intervened with ● (Themes of safety alerts included Inappropriate Use, Depression, Self-Harm/Grief, Suicide) 	28	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of students/families contacted for academic support or social and emotional needs 	96	112

Social Worker Aggregate Data and Critical Info

03/13/20 Through 05/08/20	Middle School	Upper School
Safety/Risk Assessments	3	2
NTA Notifications Processed	12	N/A
Social Worker Referrals	7	21
Case Management	2	2
Safety Alert Response	8	1
Counseling Services Initiated	13	19

So What?

The Student Support Services Team would like to extend our deepest appreciation to our entire faculty and staff for the heroic work that they have all engaged over the past month to transition MWA's delivery platform of our

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comprehensive services to high-quality distance learning programming. In true Marlin fashion, we have modeled for the community how to rise to the challenge in even the most dire and unfamiliar of circumstances.

Since the inception of our school closure planning, the Student Support Services Team (S3T) has been engaged in a full-court press “Critical Needs Outreach” campaign. Our efforts have centered on identifying and supporting our most vulnerable students and closing the family need, school-connection, and participation gaps.

We are eager to confront the challenges of this unprecedented time and we are rallying our spirits and resources for the journey ahead in order to meet the evolving needs of our school community. Maintaining a continuum of familiar practices is critical as we strive to provide a much needed sense of normalcy for our youth and families during these uncertain and tumultuous times. To that end, we have pursued every opportunity to educate and remind the community, as we delved into the new realm of interactive online instructional and holistic program offerings, that we have maintained a strong continuum of student support services providing all of the familiar supports our parents, teachers, and students are accustomed to and have grown to trust. Our resounding motto has been “**When in doubt, reach out,**” and our Student Support Services Team has been there every step of the way through this crisis to answer the call.

We know that the large-scale changes and adjustments that have come with transitioning MWA’s comprehensive services to high quality distance learning programming has been challenging, but we do not face these challenges alone. Together, we can accomplish all things. Through our efforts, we know that all of our students are safe, supported, and connected to their holistic school-based resources and instructional offerings to the highest degree possible.

Now What?

The Student Supports Services Team will conduct divisional “needs assessments” to evaluate school culture and climate needs and identify priority areas for proactive and responsive services for the 2020-21 school year, and for potential summer program contingencies. We will use student and parent/guardian survey data, discipline and suspension data, attendance data, behavioral referral trends, and counseling referral trends to inform our efforts and to guide the development of our year-long goals. Based on our needs assessment findings, we will develop a three-tiered support plan (universal supports, targeted programming for groups of students with similar support needs, and intensive individual interventions for our most vulnerable students) that includes but is not limited to:

- **Tier 1:** *Universal Community Building* and school counseling curriculum.
- **Tier 2:** Targeted group counseling/mentoring services, expanded orientation modules, and reintegration to campus efforts for our most vulnerable students (chronically absent, multiple suspensions, cumulative GPAs below 2.0, and low distance learning participation).
- **Tier 3:** Intensive individual psychological services from our Social Workers and FPA clinicians for our students with the most acute identified needs.
 - **Holistic Parent/Guardian Education Initiatives:** To increase the impact of ongoing case management for our students with the most intensive needs, the Student Support Services Team will seek opportunities to work with our FPA clinicians to strategically build relationships with parent/guardians and provide psychoeducation on topics such as: Healthy Communication, Parenting and Stress Management Best Practices, Life Dream Reinforcement and PMSC Concepts,

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and will work to triage emerging family needs that impede student health, development and academic achievement.

Meal Services

Cedrice Bennett, Director of School Operations

What?

Successes

- Launched full-scale meal distribution on 3rd day of closure - served 846 meals day 1, week 1
- Safely implemented meal service plan strictly adhering to CDC guidelines for social distancing with essential MWA personnel and families receiving meals
- Out of an abundance of caution to manage exposure risk to MWA essential personnel we serve breakfast & lunch meals (including snacks) rationed for one week in a 2-day/4-hour window
- At the close of Week 8 of school closure, MWA has served more than 14,000 meals to MWA families and local community
- Average number of students served is **232 students per week**
- Served more than 500 Non-MWA students

Challenges

- Initially, the Seamless Summer (SSO) waiver **required** students to be present for reimbursable meal distribution
- Low external community participation
- Ensuring safety, maintaining proper social distancing protocol for staff and families in light of the rising number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Richmond and San Pablo above the rest of the cities within the county

So What?

In the initial 3 weeks or so of meal services, the USDA's criteria for Local Education Agencies (LEA) required that LEA's to serve reimbursable meals only to students who were physically present at the time meals were received. Although MWA established within the meal service planning process not to refuse meals to any family, staff did encourage caregivers to have their student(s) present at the time of service. We learned quickly that the USDA requirements for student presence at the time of service provided an unsustainable model of meal distribution that negatively impacted MWA and families. The data capturing this time period reflects a highly successful meal service operation with the reimbursement restriction in place being that we served 4,803 meals. However, there were 2 unique and significant variables that directly impacted community participation during that time period -- the start of distance learning and unknown mode(s) of transmission of the novel COVID-19 virus.

First, the start of distance learning and the distribution of paper learning packets directly impacted the number of students and families on campus in the first full week of meal service. We've learned that there is typically higher community participation in MWA's meal service on the dates when paper learning packets are distributed. The demand for paper learning packets was also higher due to many pandemic provisions (ex. Free wifi with Comcast) not yet in place to support students with distance learning. Nearly every family who came to campus to receive paper learning packets also received meals.

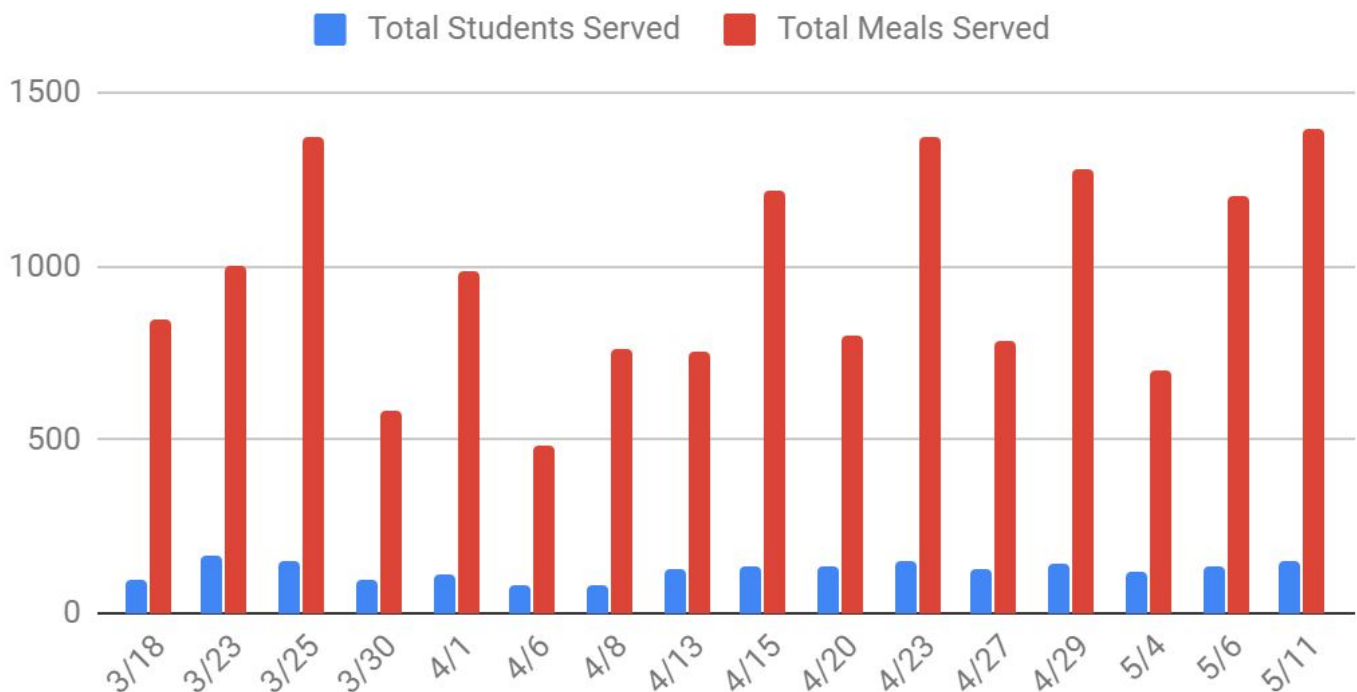
Secondly, the Shelter-In-Place order went into effect a day prior to the initial meal service date due to the many

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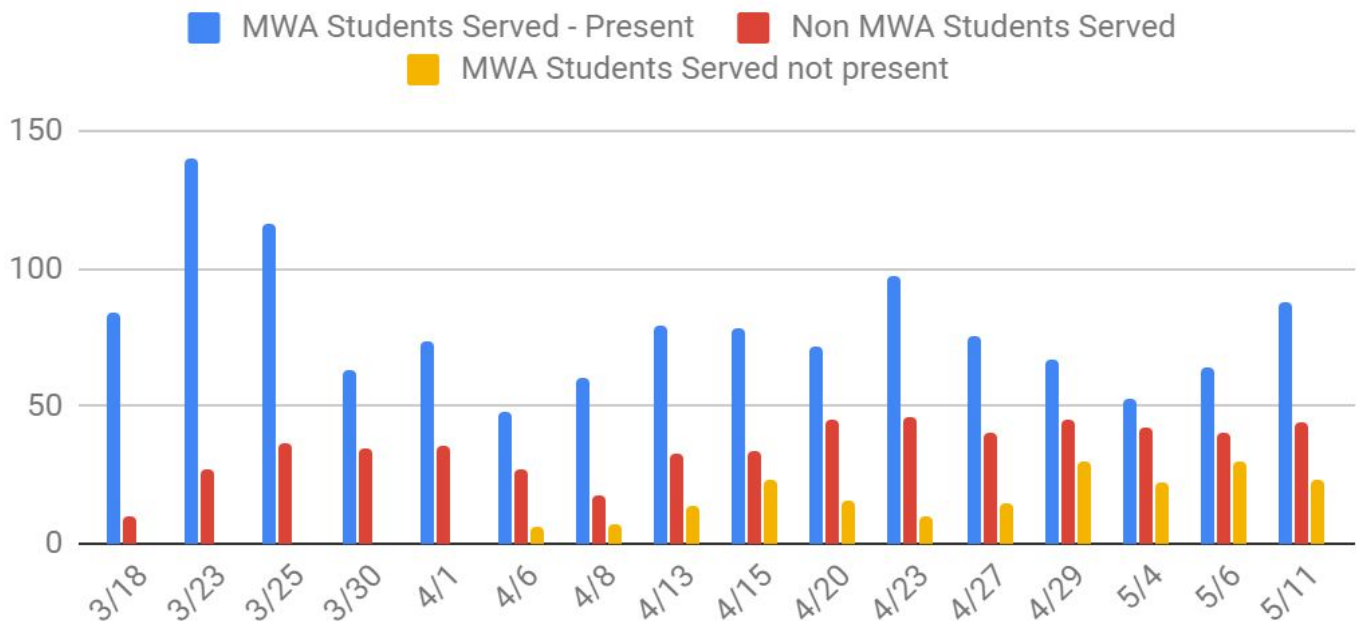
unknowns of the novel COVID-19 virus, including mode(s) of transmission. Many families reported reluctance to bring their student(s) out of the home but did so out of need as they were impacted by food shortages in grocery stores and alternative sources were not fully operational. Some families reported that they would not participate in MWA's food service beyond learning of the USDA's criteria reporting not feeling welcomed to receive meals. So, although the numbers were high we realize that some families were missed and the impact rippled through subsequent days of service.

MWA is committed to not being a school in the community exclusively serving only our internal key stakeholders. We strive to be a school of the community providing services to our surrounding community as well. In alignment with our commitment to our internal and external communities, we look to narrow the gap between MWA students and non-MWA students who benefit from our meal service to as slim a margin as possible. The graph below depicts the numbers for total meals served, MWA student(s) present at meal distribution, MWA student(s) not present at meal distribution and non-MWA students who received meal service. According to our data, we have realized a disproportionate gap between our internal and external communities' participation in our meal service.

The safety of our staff and families is of the highest priority of concern for the Operations Team along with easing staff's fear and anxiety during meal service operations. Within the initial 3 weeks or so of meal service we learned that the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Richmond and San Pablo were growing and surpassing numbers in other cities within Contra Costa County. There were many conflicting reports regarding mode(s) of transmission of the virus. There were multiple real-time changes to CDC recommendations for effective personal protective equipment (PPE) that minimized the risk of contracting and spreading of the virus as well. We also had to be accountable for our staff who were considered part of the high risk population not responding well to the limited COVID-19 medical treatment.



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Now What?

The USDA repealed its initial requirement of student presence at the time of meal service and shifted reimbursement primarily to the number of meals served. This decision allowed meal service to be more accommodating and welcoming to some of our most vulnerable families both internally and externally. Since this decision we've realized a significant narrowing of the margin between MWA students and non-MWA students served weekly to only 2%. We anticipate the margin to maintain or disappear as we continue to implement our pandemic response plan.

We currently use an algorithm to inform our meal order numbers. The algorithm calculates what percentage of MWA's student body participates in weekly meal service. We then incorporate a 20-35% increase above the calculated student body participation percentage to accommodate staff families and our external community members. On dates when meal service and paper learning packet distribution occur together there is an additional increase of 10-15% in response to the spike in participation according to the data trends.

MWA leadership has incorporated a daily update and planning Zoom meeting to stay abreast of pandemic recommendations and guidelines from the CDC, CDE and CCH to make necessary real-time safety adjustments to the meal service plan. We are able to effectively protect our staff and families by providing the most up-to-date requirements for social distancing and PPE. MWA has also strongly encouraged regularly scheduled 1:1 check-ins with staff and immediate supervisors as a means of quickly identifying concerns and ease anxiety through transparent communication. The expectation of weekly 1:1 staff check-ins provide a platform for staff to regularly voice challenges and successes and we are able to get insight on how to better support essential staff members.

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Family Communication (School-wide)

Raynell Crews-Gamez

What?

- Families have received 16 academy-wide messages, since 3/18
- More messages were sent early on, 3 times per week for the first three weeks, as the situation was rapidly developing
- Messages are now sent weekly or bi-weekly, depending on the availability of information, typically on Sundays at 6 PM
- Families receive messages via text message, email, and recorded automated telephone messages in English and Spanish
- Messaging has included key updates including how to access technology support, meal distribution, distance learning packet distribution, and resources for mental health and social services
- Teacher leaders are emailed recaps of messages and links to documents that go out to families

Example:

The message below was sent to families as an automated message, email, text and was linked on the MWA website. The highlighted areas correspond to documents sent to families and are pictured or listed below.

1. IT Help Flier (sample below)
2. State Testing Update
3. PowerSchool How to Guide (sample below)
4. Family Survey (sample below)

Dear MWA Families,

At MWA we believe that love and support are priceless. Our students have completed six weeks of distance learning with the help of your love and support. Today you will receive an email or text message from SchoolMint with information on how to access your child's **progress report** online through PowerSchool. Paper copies of your child's progress report along with other important documents should arrive in your mailbox this week by Wednesday. Please review your Wave-Makers progress report and reach out to teachers if you have any questions or if any supports are needed.

In the message, you will also learn how to get help with **technology**, receive an update on **state assessments** and will get a link to a very important family **survey** ([ENGLISH](#) / [SPANISH](#)). The online survey will help us understand how sheltering in place due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) has affected you and your family. We will use this information to make plans for how to continue supporting our students and families.

Thank you, and as always, stay safe.

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NEED TECHNOLOGY HELP?
WE'RE HERE FOR YOU.
SEND AN EMAIL TO ITHelpDesk@MWAACADEMY.ORG
THE TECHNOLOGY TEAM WILL RESPOND TO YOUR EMAIL AND HELP YOU GET BACK TO YOUR SCHOOLWORK!
MOST ISSUES CAN BE FIXED WITHOUT YOU EVER LEAVING HOME! IF YOUR DEVICE NEEDS TO BE REPAIRED, THE IT TEAM WILL MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOU.
PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CAMPUS UNLESS YOU HAVE AN APPOINTMENT. WE CANNOT HELP ANYONE WHO DOES NOT HAVE AN APPOINTMENT.

HOW TO ACCESS GRADES AND CREATE AUTOMATIC PROGRESS REPORTS USING POWERSCHOOL

1. Log into PowerSchool Parent Portal
2. Click on Quarter 3 grade for the class that you would like to review
3. To create a progress report, click email notifications on the left
4. Choose the frequency that you would like to receive automatic progress reports to your email

Parent/Guardian Family Needs & Support Survey
Tell us what you need! We want to be here for you!
This survey will be used for MWA to assess what our families need in order to best support student learning as we shelter in place. Our goal is to identify trends so that we can create plans to address our students' needs. Answers are ANONYMOUS. Responses will be grouped together to help us identify trends. We will not share the answers with anyone outside of MWA. Please answer as honestly as possible so that we can make informed decisions.

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So What?

Based on feedback from parent representatives and survey data, families appreciate the cadence of messages from MWA. Of English speaking families, 77% prefer to receive text message updates, 78% prefer email and 52% prefer Automated Telephone Messages. Of Spanish speaking families, 80% prefer text messages, 78% prefer email and 66% prefer Automated Telephone Messages. 13% of Spanish speaking respondents and 8.7% of English speaking respondents report using the MWA website as a source of information.

Now What?

As a result of survey data, and positive feedback, we will continue to use our current methods of communication, including emails, text messages and Automated Telephone Messages. We will work to improve the parent use of the website, as this is currently an underutilized source of information. We will compile the results of our Family Survey and discuss them at the leadership level, taking parent feedback into consideration as we continue to craft our response to the COVID-19 shelter in place situation.