



MWA Board Report

December 2020

MWA Chief Executive Officer Report

Alton B. Nelson, Jr.

WHAT

We are doing our best to make decisions based on our **three areas of optimization**:

1. *Safety*
2. *Teaching and learning*
3. *Social-emotional development and support*

We are doing our best to minimize the safety risks during **pandemic**, while also optimizing for teaching and learning and social emotional support. In November, the MWA community had a few confirmed COVID cases (students, staff, and parents). The higher rates of infections in Richmond add to the duress our families are experiencing during a time of economic uncertainty. As of now, no area public middle or high schools are open or plan to open soon. Recently, area charter leaders met to discuss the conditions and trade-offs for opening.

The **general conditions and expectations from the state** continue to evolve. MWA leadership is pivoting and adapting to new and different expectations/requirements for instruction, student support, and assessment. For example, there is a chance that state tests will be required of our students in the spring. As of now, it is not clear how the tests will be administered, what subjects will be assessed, and how long the assessments will be.

The overall **well-being of students and staff** are one of my current concerns. The combinations of the elections, the pandemic, and the stresses of working under pandemic restrictions is taking a cumulative toll on the community. I have scheduled meetings to seek input from our Center for Holistic Support Services, faculty, and students to learn more.

Certainly, **post-election**, the local landscape for charter schools has shifted, as board candidates with strong “anti-charter” support have been elected to both the local school board (WCCUSD) and to our charter authorizer’s board (CCCOE). As always, we will engage the new members to help them learn more about MWA first-hand, as well as share our successes and innovations.

SO WHAT

- ***DEI Work***. Our DEI service provider, *CircleUp Education*, led two of three scheduled trainings with the MWA Executive Team in the areas of inclusion, discrimination, and bias. One of my key takeaways is the importance of the institution to do more of the “heavy lifting” on supporting a more inclusive environment. We will resume training in January.



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- **Student Well-Being.** I met with members of the Center for Holistic Services Team to learn more about the challenges of supporting students during this time. There has been an increase in reports of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts. Parents have been offered, and have been more willing to accept, various forms of psychological supports, referrals to counseling providers, and general parent education support. With increased demand, this team is doing its best to strategically triage and serve those it can and refer others where appropriate. A trained psychologist led a workshop for parents in November that was well received. I anticipate that the 2nd Interim budget will include adjustments to account for shifts and additions in services and personnel to meet the demand.

NOW WHAT

- **Q2 Reflections.** As we near the end of Q2 (Dec. 31st), I will be formally engaging with my team (executive leadership) on their Q2 objectives and one area of focus for continuous improvement in Q3. In this way, I am identifying more ways to engage authentically in performance feedback discussions throughout the year as opposed to just the annual performance review in the late spring/early summer.
- **Training & Support.** Some of our new and experienced leaders are/or will receive coaching. I have seen positive results as leaders are learning specific skills and using specific tools to broaden their approach to effective leadership.

Goals & Updates for 2020-21

Goal #1

Discuss, develop, and agree on definitions, goals, and metrics in a set of cascading MOCHAs (a delegation framework – Managers, Owners, Contributors, Helpers, and Approver) in the areas of:

- *a school-wide instructional philosophy*
- *innovation in teaching and learning practices*
- *social emotional development practices*
- *insights into the experiences of our Black stakeholders at MWA (students, parents, staff, and alumni)*

Goal #1 Updates

- **Progress** – Dr. Ward-Jackson and I have met with the MOCHA Owners once and have another meeting scheduled for December. The MOCHA Owners are launching surveys, scheduling interviews, and engaging with MWA leaders, peers, external service providers in moving the work forward. I am encouraged with initial progress.
- **Timelines** – The timeline remains the same with key updates to share out in January (and potentially needing to extend the initial work through the end of January/early February).



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Goal #2

Co-lead the strategic plan Program Committee Team (PCT), with Patrick, to meet Year 1 milestones and goals of the new strategic plan. Examples include expanding *college access* education in earlier grades at MWA (e.g. as early as 5th grade and with targeted programming for parents and students) and identifying unique instructional practices and innovations to be able to share with others.

Goal #2 Updates

At the November PCT meeting we discussed the recognition of the initial successes of MWA's four-year college Wave-Makers in CAP and the challenges of Wave-Makers pursuing community college pathways or who are not finding as much success in either pathway. Next steps include CAP's Melissa Fries, Dr. Ward-Jackson, and Mr. Siapno engaging in deeper discussions about strategic areas and programmatic shifts to address these items.

Chart of MOCHA Owners and Key Question(s) to Address

Initiative	MOCHA Manager(s)	MOCHA Owner(s)	Aim/Question
<i>Black Stakeholders (Parents, Students, Staff, & Alumni)</i>	Nelson & Ward-Jackson	Crews-Gamez (Parents) Ortega (Students) Stillwell (Staff) Adams (Alumni)	This MOCHA initiative will be successful if it allows us to ascertain the extent to which MWA was/is affirming and less affirming for our Black stakeholders that could inform institutional changes and adjustments; and if it helps us celebrate and continue to do what has been effective.
<i>Unified Vision for Instruction</i>	Ward-Jackson	Shelburne	The aim of this MOCHA is to arrive at a unified instructional approach that can be articulated and shared with internal and external constituents and stakeholders. It can combine a single statement with specific tenets of the approach or different bullet points. It must make it clear what the universal elements of instruction that should be able to be identified, seen, experienced, understood, and communicated.
<i>Innovation in Instruction</i>	Ward-Jackson	Shelburne	The aim of this MOCHA is to arrive at specific instructional innovations that will be engaged in for the 2020-21 school year. What things can be tried on a trial basis, who should be doing this work, what are they trying to find out, and how will they report out their findings?
<i>Social-Emotional Development & Support</i>	Ward-Jackson	Greene	The aim of this MOCHA is to develop, track, and periodically share out the various measures MWA is engaging in this year to address social-emotional development and support.