

## Holistic Support Services

Brandon Greene, Director of Holistic Support Services

### What?

To optimize for the social-emotional well-being of all stakeholders in a year of extraordinary challenges, the Holistic Support Services Department is proposing the procurement of a wellness partnership with Seeds of Awareness. Seeds of Awareness is a Bay-Area nonprofit organization that serves K-12 schools providing comprehensive social-emotional and mindfulness education to teachers, students and parents. Seeds' mission is to transform schools and communities by cultivating empathy and mindfulness. Seeds provides a 360-degree solution for schools and districts looking to address the social, academic, and emotional challenges of their students and families. Seeds provides comprehensive mindfulness instruction to teachers, students, and parents, utilizing the innovative educational program of Seeds training director Daniel Rechtshaffen, author of "The Way of Mindful Education" and creator of MindfulEducation.com, an online training module for teachers. In addition to mindfulness instruction, Seeds offers counseling and mentoring, social skills instruction, and parent support groups. Seeds approaches are trauma-informed and evidence-based.

Seeds of Awareness was identified as an ideal fit for partnership with MWA by the Director of Holistic Support Services and a MWA Social Worker after jointly researching and conducting a comprehensive comparative analysis of three local social-emotional and mindful education programs. After meeting with respective program executives, reviewing the scope of available support resources, and observing implementation of these programs in local schools with similar demographics to MWA, Seeds of Awareness distinguished itself as the best fit for partnership with MWA. Seeds sets itself apart as the leading choice for a wellness partnership because it offers the strongest leadership structure, provides the largest array of services to support all stakeholders in the school community, has the most competitive pricing structure, and delivers the highest degree of culturally competent personnel. As a result, the Holistic Support Services Department is proposing the development of a formal partnership with Seeds of Awareness at MWA, as itemized in the attached contract proposal below:

[Making Waves - Seeds Contract Proposal 2020-21 with HSST Amendments](#)

### So What?

The 2020-21 school year has presented a level and volume of crises and challenges never before seen in our MWA community. With the impact of Covid-19 and sustained social isolation, pervasive incidents resulting from systemic racial injustice, election season stressors and civil unrest, the strain of the economic and mental health impacts of state-wide shut-down orders on family dynamics, and the challenges associated with distance learning for all stakeholders, we know that extraordinary resources will be required to meet the demands of this unprecedented season. In order to optimize for the social-emotional well-being of all stakeholders, the Holistic Support Services Team will need to substantially increase the level of support offerings being made available to our community. Instead of providing *seasonal* community-wide professional development and parent development offerings, our team will need to deliver intensive *monthly* offerings. Instead of focusing on supporting students via strong responsive services for a *limited number* of students, our department has prioritized delivering robust proactive and preventative measures for *all* students, such as with our daily Advisory offerings. A

partnership with Seeds of Awareness will provide our community with the resources necessary to meet the wide-ranging influx of demands we are currently experiencing.

We know that the quality of our students' daily experiences both in the classroom and at home will directly impact their capacity to develop Resilience and to achieve. Our Deans and Social Workers often observe and note that when the adults in childrens' lives are equipped with the skills to manage their own emotions then they can properly teach, model and reinforce the skills and habits that are required for students to overcome adversity and succeed. For this reason, our Seeds partnership proposal prioritizes ongoing training and development for our faculty and parent community in the areas of resilience building, self-care, restorative relationship building, and conflict resolution.

The Holistic Support Services Team understands that in order to optimize for the social-emotional well-being of all stakeholders we need to exemplify professional practices characterizing a balanced and sustainable work environment. This is especially pertinent as we continue working to fully staff our Dean of Students Department and as one of our Social Workers is beginning four months of planned family leave this week. By forging a formal partnership with Seeds of Awareness we will be providing our Deans and Social Workers with the reinforcements needed to allow them to continue prioritizing delivery of critically needed and timely interventions for our students and families in this era of crises.

### **Now What?**

In the event that a formal partnership with Seeds is approved, the Director of Holistic Support Services will engage with the Directors of School Partnerships at Seeds with the intention of developing a three year train-the-trainer model partnership proposal. Ideally, through this proposed ongoing partnership, instructors and leaders will have the opportunity to elect to receive individual mentorship from the Seeds team to become certified as Mindful Educators and qualified to train their colleagues in mindful education. The goal of these next steps will be to create a school environment where all instructors are equipped to teach, model, and reinforce social-emotional learning and mindfulness skills and competencies to students via integrated inter-departmental offerings and Tier 1 lesson planning across content areas.