



# MWA Board Report

*June 2021*

## MWA Chief Executive Officer Report

Alton B. Nelson, Jr.

### Visual Highlights from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester

#### 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Grade Zoom Mtg with the CEO



#### Ms. Martinez & Ms. Campbell mtg in Phase 1C



#### Interscholastic Outdoor Volleyball – May 2021



#### Two 18<sup>th</sup> Wavers after the lottery – spring 2016





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## Reflections on the Year

The 2020-21 school year has certainly been one for the books. Who could have imagined that this level of disruption in the K-12 space would occur – e.g. wildfires, civil unrest, pivotal state, local, and national elections, and a pandemic. Are these signs of the “end” or the start of a “new beginning”? One could make a case for either or both assumptions being “true”.

As we wrapped up the 2019-20 school year in distance learning mode, high-level **goals for 2020-21** were:

- Protecting and supporting the health and safety of all students and staff
- Supporting ongoing teaching and learning (in whatever form would work best)
- Providing a sense of continuity, stability, and “routine” for MWA staff and families

Overall, I think we have been successful in achieving or making progress in all three of these areas. Very few students and staff contracted COVID (no deaths of MWA students and staff), teaching and learning occurred, and staff feedback through surveys and meetings were hosted. Staff commented on the increasing sense of transparency by leadership and appreciated more opportunities to address their concerns, but there is still work to do in this area.

I am proud of the fact that we were able to move forward with **key initiatives this year** that included:

- A commitment to more stakeholder engagement opportunities with executive leadership that included targeted stakeholder engagement with our Black-identifying stakeholders and ongoing engagement with upper school student leadership
- A reconfigured staff survey that also allowed for more staff engagement and leadership for unpacking the results with peers
- A rolling out and implementation of staff-led working groups addressing various topics – e.g. diversity, equity, and inclusion and school culture and climate
- A continuum of strategies and approaches to teaching and learning utilizing online systems and tools
- Continue the “one-school” model approach under one senior leader and a de-emphasis of a “Middle School” and “Upper School” division to a “one school” model with a “middle school division” and “upper school division”

This work has contributed to us learning more about what is working, what is not working, and informs where and how we can prioritize our efforts and attention moving forward. Early signs of one-school model implementation have been good.

## Strategic Plan Reflections

We have made so much more progress on the strategic plan than I ever would have predicted. Patrick and I worked collaboratively and effectively to create space for our respective senior leaders to take ownership of the plan with support and guidance from us on timing and priority. On the MWA side, I think the alignment work finally began in earnest. As a result, great progress was made in having both the MWA College and Career Counseling team and the CAP team work collaboratively to better understand what is working in the partnership and areas for growth.

An outcome of this collaboration led to the decision to make CAP “Opt-in” for MWA students and to reduce the CAP scholarship maximum award level in the next few years. A plus of this process included a collaborative roll-out and engagement with MWA and CAP staff, MWA students, and MWA parents. Both of these decisions help us make progress on financial sustainability and programmatic goals outlined in the strategic plan.



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Additional work ahead includes resolving values and identity tensions between MWA and CAP. These “tensions” are derived from:

- **origins and structure** – e.g. non-selective public charter school (2007) vs. education non-profit (1989)
- **eligibility for ongoing support** – e.g. Wave-Makers not meeting CAP expectations)
- **the focus of our respective programs** – e.g. college success versus college access

A positive outcome of surfacing these tensions has been not only an embracing of openness and desire to resolve these tensions, but more importantly, a commitment to try to determine what will serve not only our respective entities the best but also what will serve our Wave-Makers the best moving forward.

An example that illustrates this tension involves what it means to be a “Wave-Maker”. At MWA, once a “Wave-Maker” always a Wave-Maker. For CAP, meeting specific requirements of eligibility impacts “good standing” in the program and eligibility to receive certain kinds of supports (e.g. the scholarship). And While CAP has always offered to continue to offer support to non-eligible Wave-Makers, it can result in a sort of “fracturing” of the relationship and maybe a sense that if they are not actively participating in CAP, that they are no longer a “Wave-Maker”. All of the longitudinal insights that we are uniquely poised to collect, as a 5<sup>th</sup> grade through college and career provider, could yield us incomplete data featuring only our “successes” as opposed to the students that need something different to be successful. We hope to work on addressing tensions like this, which can result in better alignment, better outcomes for our Wave-Makers, and clear direction and support for our respective staffs.

## Right Sizing/Medium & Long-Term Financial Sustainability

The new strategic plan expresses a need for “right-sizing” and adjusting “dosage” levels for where we apply our resources programmatically. 2020-21 was Year One of the new strategic plan. In 2019-20, after deciding not to pursue our growth plans in Pittsburg and Pinole, we made significant cuts in the Central Office, the part of the school that would support and manage the growth process. This resulted in the elimination of about 8-9 positions, and a significant savings, and a reduced philanthropic need moving forward.

Complications to the “right sizing” work includes new state statutes that are increasingly raising the level of requirements for charter schools in terms of compliance. These compliance elements require more staffing time and monitoring allowing us to meet those requirements and stay in good standing with our charter authorizer. The early flexibility for charter schools, in terms of compliance, is being largely eliminated. Additional complications are added by the pandemic and public funding opportunities presented to public schools for the next two to three years. Funded areas include staffing and programming that support psychological support for our students, social-emotional development and support for our students, IT tools and devices for students, and various kinds of new and ongoing training support for staff. The good news is that the funding supports much of the holistic services and approaches we have been doing since our inception. This one-time money will provide a much-appreciated level of support for the next two to three years, and allow us some time to determine where and how we might “right size”.

That being said, the MWA CFO (Wallace Wei) and I are working together to map out routes towards reducing expenses over the next two to three years (excluding 2021-22 coming out of the pandemic). We will seek input in helping us determine which programming and cost centers we should prioritize and at what levels. Personnel related costs are the biggest expense. Over the next couple of years, we will look to gain more insight as to what programming is proving to be most effective and why. Having this information will inform how we think about where and how to reduce costs.



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## College Admissions for 2021

There are several great headlines as we analyze our student college admissions data for our 18<sup>th</sup> Wave seniors:

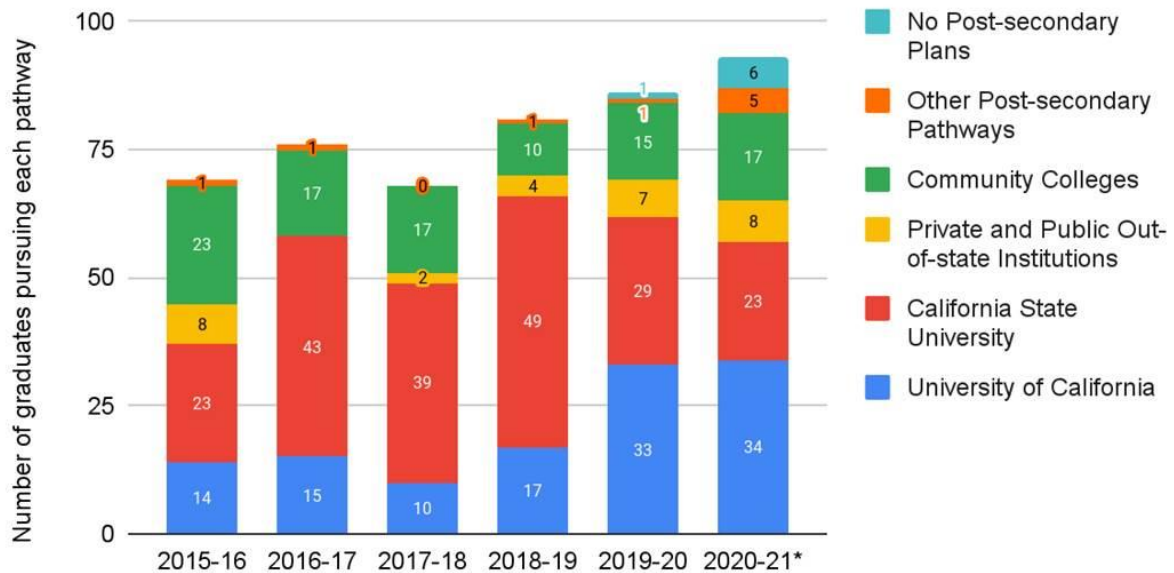
- Historic highs for Cal Berkeley and UCLA admissions and matriculation
- Overall increase in admissions rates versus historical rates (in a very competitive year)
- Steady commitment to four-year college pathways
- Consistent commitment to community college pathways and alternate career pathways
- First year of our “Opt-in” process to CAP has been successful (not enough to data to assess in medium term effects of this shift but most all college bound seniors have opted into CAP)

Additionally, I would add, that the people I have spoken with in the field of college admissions acknowledge that the following trends will likely persist, thus continuing to make our students attractive and competitive in college admissions:

- Test-optional will likely be in place for next year and highly probable moving forward into the future
- Colleges are making diversity a priority for their incoming classes – racially, socio-economically, and geographically while deprioritizing legacy and major gifts as factors for preference in admissions
- Colleges that are increasing offers of admission to our seniors means that through our first six classes of seniors, these colleges are communicating a sign of confidence in our students’ ability to do the work at their schools. If they were not having success (particularly at the highly selective schools), offers of admissions would be decreasing.

The next three graphs below were provided by Mr. Siapno, Director of the College and Career Counseling office.

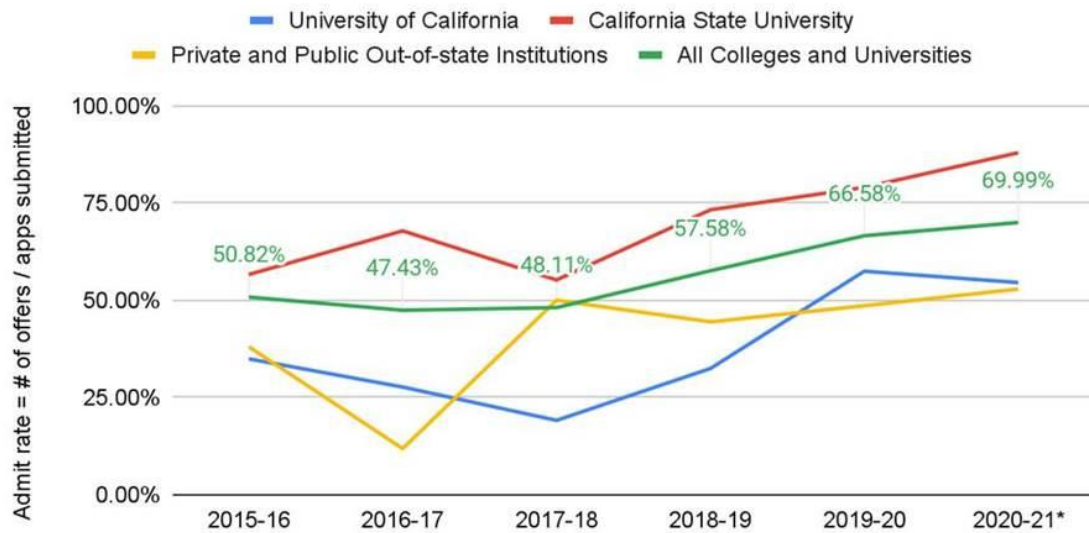
## Despite COVID-19, Making Waves Academy is maintaining its goal of 95% of graduates having a post-secondary plan



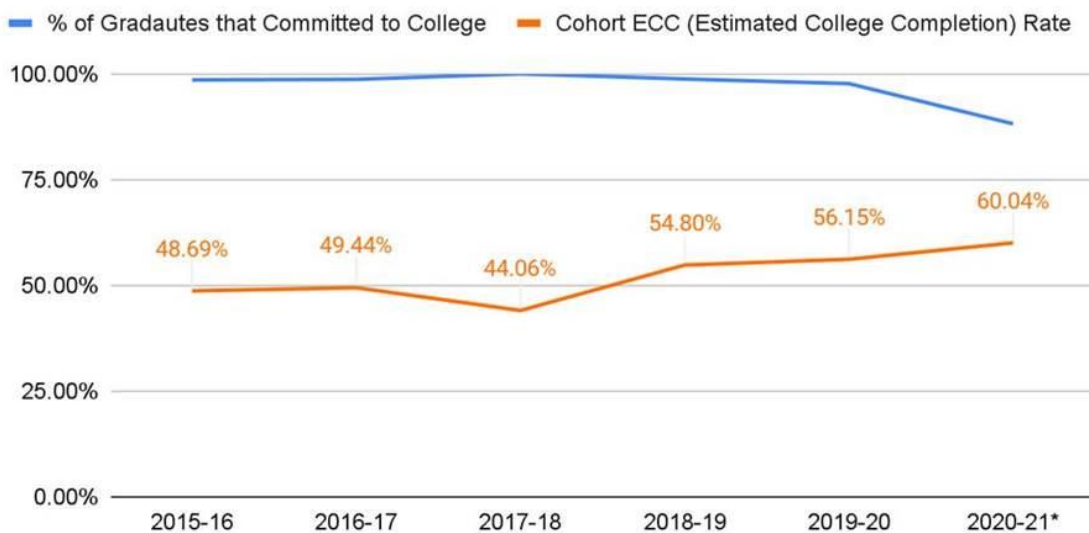


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Over the last six years, college admission rates for Wave-Makers have risen across different institution types



Based on commitment data, the 18th Wave is expected to have a college completion rate that outperforms prior cohorts





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## Stakeholder Engagement

I invested explicit time into stakeholder engagement, with students, staff, and families. Although there is still lots of work to do, I am proud of some of the progress we were able to make this year. Targeted stakeholder engagement opportunities with executive leadership included:

- town hall and other discussion sessions with the parent community
- town hall sessions with students across the academy
- listening sessions with our Black-identifying stakeholders
- open Q&A sessions with staff and more proactive communication with staff
- a standing quarterly meeting with upper school student leadership (ASB)
- targeted engagement with our Black-identifying stakeholders – students, staff, and families
- more proactive communication celebrating and acknowledging various communities within the MWA community including: Asian & Pacific Islanders (Asian Pacific Heritage Month), Black/African Americans (Black History Month), Latinx (Cinco de Mayo), LGBTQ community members (Pride Month), and women (Women's History Month)

This level of engagement and proactive communication was an articulated plan coordinated with the CEO of Making Waves Foundation as a follow-up to a joint letter we shared earlier in the year to share our commitment to address systemic racism and promote equity and inclusion in the Making Waves community.

## 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, & alumni)*

### COMPLETED

### 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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

The larger leadership team (MWA and CAP leadership) retreat, co-hosted by Patrick and I in May, went really well. We have a clear sense of pain points and next steps. Patrick and I are moving assertively and in a supportive manner to address tensions and bolster communication and values tensions. I feel great our progress this year.



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## 18<sup>th</sup> Wave Post-Secondary Plans

### College Commitments 2021 (as of June 1<sup>st</sup>)

<b>University of California (34)</b>	
Berkeley	13
Davis	6
Los Angeles	4
Merced	6
Santa Cruz	5
<b>CA State University (23)</b>	
East Bay	5
Sacramento	4
San Francisco	7
San Jose	3
San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly)	1
Sonoma	3
<b>In-State Private Institutions (4)</b>	
Dominican	2
Loyola Marymount	1
Saint Mary's College of CA	1
<b>Out of State Private Institutions (1)</b>	
Lehigh	1
<b>Out of State Public Institutions (3)</b>	
U. of Nevada, Reno	2
U. of Texas at Austin	1
<b>Community Colleges (15)</b>	
Berkeley City College	2
Contra Costa College	6
Diablo Valley College	3
Laney College	1
Lone Star College (TX)	1
Undecided	2



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## Post-Secondary Pathways Other Than College

Job or Job Offer	5
No Post-secondary Plan	8

## *College Admissions Data (High Level)*

Institution Type	Admissions Offers	Students Committing	% Matriculated
University of California (UC)	139	34	24.5%
California State University (CSU)	262	23	8.8%
In-State Privates	26	4	15.4%
Out-of-State Privates	15	1	6.7%
Out-of-State Publics	13	3	23.1%
Historically Black Colleges & Univ. (HBCUs)	1	0	0.0%
Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs)			

*One of our goals had been for students to apply to wide range of schools outside of the UCs. The data below shows that despite the pandemic, students still showed interest in applying to a range of varying schools.*

### UC Campuses of Admissions but No Matriculation

UC Irvine	UC Dan Diego
UC Riverside	UC Santa Barbara

### CSU Campuses of Admissions but No Matriculation

CSU Maritime Academy	CSU Dominguez Hills	CSU San Bernardino
Cal Poly Pomona	CSU Long Beach	CSU San Marcos
CSU Bakersfield	CSU Los Angeles	CSU Stanislaus
CSU Channel Islands	CSU Monterey Bay	CSU Humboldt
CSU Chico	CSU Northridge	CSU San Diego

### In-State Private Institution Admissions but No Matriculation

Holy Names U.	UOP	Marquette U.
Mills College	Beloit College	Otis College of Art and Design
Santa Clara U.	Dickinson College	U. of Denver
Scripps College	Earlham College	U. of Portland
U. of San Diego	Hawaii Pacific U.	U. of Puget Sound
U. of San Francisco	Kalamazoo College	Vassar College
USC	Kettering U.	

### Out-of-State Public Institution Admissions but No Matriculation

Michigan State U.	Penn State U.	U. of Houston
Northern Arizona U.	Portland State U.	U. of Oregon