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**Board Report**  
School-Wide

## Board Report - September 2021

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### From the Senior School Director's Desk

Dr. E. Ward-Jackson

"Hey! Are you the lady from the videos?" At once, with this question floating in the atmosphere as I exited my car in the Middle School parking lot, I realized that I was about to greet a 6<sup>th</sup> grade Wave-Maker, for the very first time, in person. "Yes, it's me! I'm Dr. Ward-Jackson, your School Leader." We elbow-greeted, he looked up and exclaimed, "woah, you're really tall!" to which I responded, "And you are really brilliant!"

The majority of lost students that I either escorted to class or supported with a campus map were 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders. Although we talked about it, and although they were included in our planning efforts, I think everyone had a moment of shock when we realized, in practice, that it wasn't only our 5<sup>th</sup> graders having a new school experience, nor our 9<sup>th</sup> graders having a new campus experience, but instead, over 600 of our students were brand new to their on-site learning environment. Thank goodness, the first two weeks of school were dedicated to "The Big Splash," which was a combination of orientation and community building activities and opportunities for ALL students, grades 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, and not just for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students as in past years. The reality is, the first couple days of school involved lots of time dedicated to simply learning how to "be" around each other, and how to navigate our space.

It took a week for our Wave-Makers to warm-up. The first couple of days were virtually silent. Oh, but now things are buzzing! We're here. The place we've been longing to be for the past 15 months. We are back on our beautiful campus, back to 100% on-site instruction, and back to engaging with our Wave-Makers, staff, and families in-person. We are following safety guidelines so we're not hosting large group meetings, but we are using zoom to support meetings, and we are in-person as often as possible.

In this Board Report we will cover Summer Professional Development, we will learn about some of the tools used to support student onboarding, and we will dive deeply into Intervention, which is the area that is at the heart of our recovery plans for **learning loss** and **unfinished learning**. As we delve into details around the start of this atypical school year and how we are engaging a population of student and families who are not only experiencing learning loss and unfinished learning, but who are also dealing with a myriad of feelings associated with what it all means and the efforts that it will take to thrive and grow, I think it is important to get very clear on mindsets, priorities, goals and objectives.

**Mindset:** We are focusing on growth mindset with two very important drivers:

- **Fortitude:** Strength of mind and heart to experience adversity with courage
- **Resilience:** The capacity to recover quickly from difficulty

We are also focusing on what is *good enough*, versus what is *gold standard* by illuminating quality over perfection:

- **Excellence:** Quality of being great
- **Perfection:** State of being free from flaws

**Priorities:** We continue to optimize for the priority areas: Safety, Rigorous Instruction, and Social-emotional Well-being:

- **Safety:**
  - Mitigation strategies in place
  - Covid-19 contact tracing protocols in place
  - Routines, Expectations, Procedures (REPS) in place for students and adults
  - School closure plans in place: learning models and social resources prepared for future interruptions

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- **Maximizing On-Site Learning:**
  - Implement learnings from Summer Academy
  - Streamline Intervention programming
  - Vacancy/Absence staffing contingency planning
  - Onboarding exciting new curriculum in math and social studies
  - Implement learnings from Applied Tech during distance learning
  
- **Social-Emotional Well-Being:**
  - Support for students, employees, and families
  - Focus on school culture and on-site student engagement
  - Support from contract services and our Holistic Support Team

**Goals:** Our WASC goals are our School-wide Goals. This year we have worked to streamline all departmental goals and initiatives, to ensure that we are focusing specifically on our school-wide goals, and that we are participating in a process of aggressive prioritization that results in objectives and departmental key performance indicators achieving milestones toward the fulfillment of our WASC/School-wide goals, which are:

1. **Support for All Learners:** Develop and refine vertically-aligned programs to support all learners.
2. **College and Career Readiness:** Refine holistic support for college and career readiness that builds all students' capacity for graduation and success beyond high school.
3. **Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion:** Create a safe, inclusive, and high-performing environment for all students and adults that are informed through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Senior School Director Objectives & Key Results/Indicators (developing):** As the SSD, for the first quarter I am focusing in on a few key objectives:

- **Student engagement and transition back to on-site learning**
- **Staffing and Instructional contingency plans**
- **Re-examine and reinvent our approach to family engagement**

Focusing on the above three areas responds directly to our school-wide goals, to our priorities, and to the most present needs of our school community.

Keeping in mind that our Wave-Makers are active owners in their learning experiences, and that we are here to cultivate and support the development of skills and competencies that will enable our students to thrive, even in an uncertain future, it is imperative that we work to stay healthy, to stay safe, and to secure mission-aligned talent, so that we can keep our campus doors opened and our classrooms filled with learning.

Our teachers are incredible. They are showing up every day, offering to help as much as they can, and they are doing their best to stay healthy. Our leaders have been amazing. Leaders from every area of our school have done the work to re-prioritize their plates, and have stepped into the classroom to support the continuity of learning for our students. Our staff is incomparable. From the front office to facilities, we have such a connected and efficient operations team that works diligently to ensure we are equipped to be as safe as possible. And, our families have been so supportive. Parents and guardians have been forthcoming with grace and understanding. They have shared appreciation for our work and for our safety measures, and they are truly showing up as champions when it comes to navigating arrival and dismissal traffic, and understanding the challenges that we are facing as we launch school following a remote year and while still in the throes of a pandemic.

## Professional Development Overview

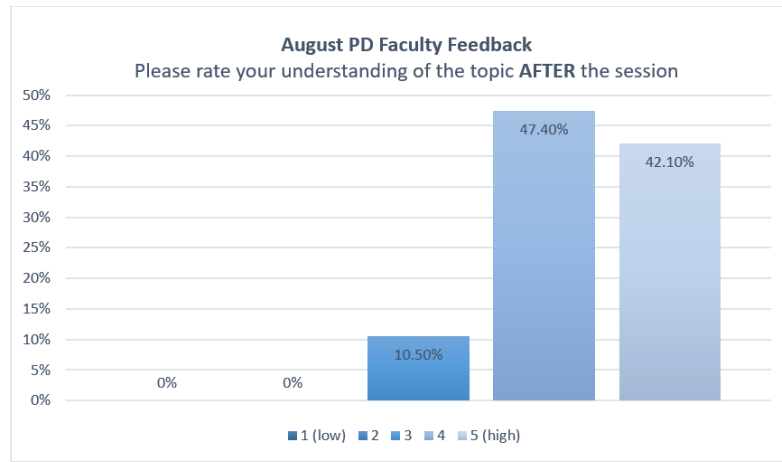
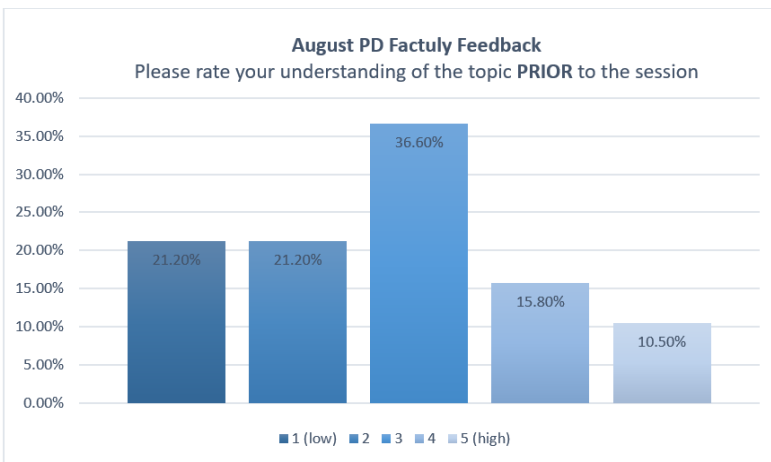
Micah Stilwell (Senior Director of Academic Instruction)

### What?

As an educator, the launch of August Professional Development has always signified the potential each year presents for continued learning, craft refinement, and deepening collaboration. This year, August Professional Development launched utilizing a hybrid format (demonstrated in the image) allowing faculty and staff to prioritize relationship building, engage in collaborative planning, and continue professional learning; while providing the community the opportunity to ease into our return to campus.



Whether on-site or remote, faculty spent the two weeks of professional development actively engaging in training on MWA's systems and safety protocols and participated in two learning summits: 1) Teaching and Learning Summit: Rigorous & Relevant Instruction and 2) Holistic Support Services Summit: Cultivating Wellness. By the end of the professional development, teachers effectively mapped out their first semester of instruction and committed to community and grade level specific routines, expectations, and procedures (REPS) for our Wave-Makers.



As always, faculty sought additional time to unpack their curriculum, plan for instruction, learn about their incoming Wave-Makers, and build community with their peers. The continuation of the work started in August will continue to inform the agendas for grade level, content team, and Friday professional development for the remainder of the year.

While much of this summer's professional development felt familiar, the culminating task, preparing to welcome Wave-Makers back to campus after being away for 15 months, was new! The collaborative approach that leaders and teachers took in launching The Big Splash (our two week return to campus program for Wave-Makers) reiterated the collective brilliance within our community and helped many end August Professional Development energized and excited for the first day of school.

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### So What?

Upon reflection, August Professional Development truly captured the imprint a year and a half of remote learning has left on our approach to instruction. This year, each facilitating team prioritized access and differentiation when determining what content to cover and how the material would be delivered. The integrated use of a wide range of online learning platforms, paired with instructional best practices, illustrates just how much last year's key learnings are now fundamental to the way we engage in teaching and learning.

"I think the asynchronous format was perfect for this information, and I appreciate the slides as well."

For example, several sessions were hosted live, while other material was shared asynchronously. Team members were able to collaborate seamlessly, both in person and remotely. Most importantly, multiple facilitators demonstrated an ease in differentiating sessions, in real-time, based on participant feedback.

For example, during the New Faculty session on Formative Assessments, faculty organically broadened the opportunities for engagement on the Google Slide as well as through Zoom Chat, building upon both the written reflection and live discussion simultaneously happening amongst participants.

Although the technology has been readily available for years, returning from distance learning allows us to continue to optimize the different ways learners are able to engage with content.

The screenshot shows a Google Slides presentation titled "Unpacking Formative Assessments". The main slide contains a definition of formative assessment: "Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes." The word "process" is highlighted in blue, "during" in green, "provides feedback" in yellow, and "adjust" in red. Below the slide is a "Collaborative Annotation" prompt: "Which elements of the definition for Formative Assessments stand out or resonate with you?". To the right, a chat window shows three comments from participants: Christine Chesko (1:23 PM Aug 10) commenting on "During instruction", Clay Courchaine (1:25 PM Aug 10) discussing the goal of formative assessment, and Mariah Embry (1:26 PM Aug 10) defining "achievement".

### Now What?

In alignment with teacher feedback, the Academic Instruction Team is actively working to create opportunities to spotlight the best practices currently happening on campus. Through classroom observations, content and grade level collaboration, and an upcoming Bright Spot Symposium, planned for quarter two, we seek to not only identify but institutionalize the brilliant practices currently being implemented at MWA.

### Students Return to On-Site Engagement

Eric Mingo (Senior Dean of Students)

#### What?

##### ***Returning to a 'new' normal***

After almost two years of having zero footprint on campus, our Wave-Makers returned to campus on August 16th in the midst of an ongoing pandemic that continues to bring fear and anxiety around many unknowns. During the first two to three days middle and upper school students were confused about where to go, and how to get there--most things seemed like a first time experience to our students. Their demeanor was, as a couple of teachers put it, "subdued" and "eerily quiet" as students were trying to navigate a familiar space within a new context and new rules of engagement. Anticipating our students and teachers return to campus, the Dean of Students department supported this transition by conducting professional development that centered around the following offerings: classroom management, conflict resolution, data management training, and restorative practices. With the transition of several long-standing faculty members, and with an increase in first year teachers, we were sure to focus our professional development on maximizing the teacher-to-student interaction, while drilling down on the basics of classroom management, ranging from conflict mediation to student engagement.

#### So What?

##### ***Response to challenges (Self Care Kits & "Big Splash")***

This past summer Dr. Ward- Jackson secured a small grant (\$5,000) for the Center of Holistic Support Services. The grant was to be used specifically to support supplies and materials aimed at the promotion of social-emotional well-being. Through collaboration we decided that the best way to use these funds was to provide every 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grader with a self-care starter kit. The Deans and Social Workers distributed 340 self-care kits to every 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade cohort and also spoke to students about how to appropriately use them. Our goal was to inform students that these supports are not toys, but are tools that are meant to help them. These starter kits include: a number of manipulatives, journals, stress balls, and inspirational notepads that students can utilize to help cope and take care of themselves. Additionally, the presentations between the Deans and Social Workers proved to be a valuable touch point for student engagement as well as an excellent opportunity to showcase the intentional and strategic collaboration between Deans and Social Workers in the Center for Holistic Support Services.

Another support component of transitioning students back to onsite learning was our "Big Splash" offering. Big Splash was our induction programming that primed students to re-engage and navigate the learning environment. Big Splash focused on: community building, REPs, restorative practices, dress code, cell phone, and nutrition expectations. We were intentional about our focus areas and wanted to be flexible around aspects of student engagement in this "new normal", while simultaneously anchoring students in traditional guidelines and expectations.

#### Now What?

##### ***Continuing Momentum/Advisory***

We will continue to build on these early supports and approaches by utilizing our advisory content. The focus for this year's advisory program is: *Valuing Self and Valuing Others*. This focus area is connected to our Wave-Maker affirmation, PMSC, and core values. A key tenant of our advisory program is to help humanize difference and place our core values of Respect and Community at the forefront of student engagement and development. These values have historically been a challenge and this year is no different. In support of our community and for us to see the efficacy of various support structures it is going to take the work of every community member and leader at all levels to support this endeavor, especially given the new environment that we are currently operating in.

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### Intervention

Emalyn Lopez, Intervention Services Coordinator

#### What?

We are excited to welcome Wave-Makers back to the classroom as our focus shifts to address “unfinished learning” and “learning loss.” We are broadening the scope of our services to maximize student support across all levels by ensuring that the Response to Instruction & Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>) framework is not only implemented through our intervention services but embedded in our core program. Teachers and support staff will be involved in all three tiers of instructional support: prevention (Tier 1), targeted interventions (Tier 2), and intensive interventions (Tier 3). This collaborative approach is necessary to meet the instructional needs of our Wave-Makers.

We plan to meet the needs of our students based on current diagnostic results in Math and ELA, data from the end of the 2020-21 school year and summer programming. Professional development, coaching, instructional resources and opportunities to collaborate around our students' data and strengths will be provided throughout the year.

From the first day of school, the Academic Student Support Team has been pulled into the classroom to assist with teacher vacancies and gaps in schedules. Moreover, our limited staff has impacted our ability to provide full intervention services. Nevertheless, we continue to move forward through aggressive prioritizations and continued collaborations. To maximize our services we are leaning on the Expanded Learning Opportunity (ELO) grant to help provide us with professional development, coaching, and instructional support from RT Fisher Enterprises (RTF). This will allow us to continue supporting classroom vacancies while collaboratively developing intervention programming throughout the year.

#### So What?

During summer professional development, RTF along with math coaches from their partners ARCESS ACCESS led our Math department and interventionists through a comprehensive session on instruction, data analysis and intervention to address student “unfinished learning” and “learning loss.” RTF will be providing additional professional development and resources to all our teachers and interventionists as we roll out intervention programs. Lessons on universal skills development and curricular planning for content specific interventions will help lay the groundwork to our intervention approach this year.

The Intervention Services Team will rely on MAP Growth and STAR Diagnostic data to identify areas of instructional focus and create student groupings. Identifying learning targets and analyzing student trends will help us to structure our support offered to students during designated intervention time, Differentiated Tiered Instruction (DTI) in Middle School and Marlin Hour in Upper School.

In collaboration with RTF, Grade Level Leads and Content Leads, we will develop an intervention scope and sequence aligned to grade level content. We will use this to identify instructional priorities for specific content areas and allow for targeted and timely support to address “unfinished learning” and “learning loss” during intervention programming.

With our newly approved differentiated bell schedule, we can focus on specialized support for our 5th and 6th grade students in the morning and our 7th-12th grade students in the afternoon. This schedule will give greater flexibility for our Interventionists and support staff to work with students across grade levels. We are focused on making a schedule that supports students and teachers with an all-hands-on-deck approach.



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Additionally, we are looking forward to implementing our new support roles, ELA and Math Intervention Specialists and continuing to work with our ELD coordinator to support our ELD students.

### Now What?

We continue to prioritize the type of support needed for our Wave-Makers during DTI & Marlin Hour by enrolling students needing tier 3 instruction in a math and ELA intervention course.

ELD students and students with IEPs will continue to receive designated services. GATE and enrichment classes will be offered to students who have met the tiered criteria. Every student will participate in the development of essential academic behaviors and universal skills during the first quarter in addition to recovering any “unfinished learning” and “learning loss” during their content specific intervention courses.

Grade 21/22	Tier 3 Math	Tier 3 ELA	ELD
5th			63
6th	12		68
7th	20		55
8th	28		51
9th	29	12	61
10th	21	17	24
11th	20	11	20
12th	7	6	7

We will monitor student progress through core day and intervention formative assessments, progress reports, and student performance. Students will also be encouraged to assess their progress by engaging in data analysis and goal setting sessions that will be provided by our intervention instructors.

### ELA/ELD

STAR Diagnostic will be administered three times this year and will be used to inform our instructional priorities along with formative assessments during core day. Intensive content based English intervention time will be designed to build the prerequisite skills required to access grade level texts.

ELD students will continue to receive designated support classes. Our ELD teachers will collaborate with our intervention team and ELD coordinator to support instruction. Last spring, 97% of ELD students academy wide completed the remote Summative ELPAC. This data is helping us plan and adjust instruction to meet the needs of ELs. Teachers that will



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facilitate designated ELD will receive the proper PD and instructional support.

### **Math**

Map assessments will also be administered three times this year. We will be able to use the MAP learning continuum to identify learning targets and group students during intervention. Additionally, teachers will use a “needs inventory” developed by RTF to determine units not taught. Our teachers have already begun to collaborate with ACCESS ARCHES to support math intervention. Initial work included adapting and integrating the ARCHES framework, and connecting standards to our “Year at a Glance (YAAGS) instructional plans.

ACCESS ARCHES will provide additional coaching and PD support for our math teachers to help implement strategies and give feedback in developing best practices. They will provide this support all year long.

### **Academy-Wide**

Collaboration with content and grade-level teams to ensure tight alignment between our instructional pacing and real-time learning needs will be done through participation in:

- weekly 5th-12th grade observations during in person instruction
- grade level, math and humanities team meetings
- data dive sessions

As we transition out of supporting classroom vacancies, we will need additional time to collaborate and roll out our program priorities below.

- Refine tiered criteria and student designations
- Implement a research-based reading program
- Provide additional differentiated tools for teachers to use during designated intervention time