



Board Report
School-Wide

From the Senior School Director's Desk

Dr. E. Ward-Jackson

“Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.” —Albert Einstein

Challenges (ranging from the effects of key staffing vacancies and early term resignations to increased behavioral infractions and high-volume student support needs) have tested the buoyancy of our community and have unveiled the vulnerabilities and stressors of individuals and of teams as our community fights to maintain balance and to keep moving. Nevertheless, as we near the close of our first semester of on-site learning, after having weathered distance learning and the associated impacts and residual impacts of the pandemic, I think it is important to share that we are still moving...forward.

The rapidity with which I have had to craft contingency plans and, in some cases, contingency plans for the contingency plans has been unparalleled, and has been an indicator of how the return to on-site schooling after remote learning has fundamentally shifted many facets of our work. While ingrained in the work of helping families, staff, students, and myself, learn how to effectively “do school” during a highly uncertain time and in an ever-changing environment has been one of the greatest and most rewarding challenges of my career. Particularly, grappling with creating safe spaces to examine and explore underlying assumptions about theory and practice, and to generate opportunities for new epistemologies, new methods, and new approaches has been quite the task. Research tells us that it is in times of heightened ambiguity and uncertainty that school leaders must be oriented toward learning and developing structures and systems for creative problem solving and innovation. Toward that end, my continued aim is to offer a learning environment that is “psychologically safe,” where teachers and staff can feel open and invited to take risks, to make mistakes, and to learn.

This sense of “psychological safety” (Edmondson, 1999), defined as the degree to which people view the environment as conducive to interpersonally risky behaviors like speaking up or asking for help, impacts the degree to which individual and organizational learning can occur. Research shows that even when people want (and like educators now, perhaps need) to change their practice, the perceived risks of such change may inhibit their ability to do so (e.g., Wanless et al., 2013). Research applying psychological safety to schools paints a complex portrait in which traditional professional norms, mixed leader effectiveness, and the high stakes nature of the work make creating a culture of psychological safety both critically important and extremely challenging to achieve (Edmondson et al., 2016; Weiner, 2016).¹

Today's Board meeting has a focus on three major Critical Learner student groups, 1) English Language Learners, 2) Black/African American Learners, and 3) identified “Different” Learners who are designated to receive Special Education services. When I think of the challenges we are weathering as a school community, at this juncture in the school year, and the steps that we must take to impede stagnancy and paralyzation, I view our approach to Critical Learners as an exemplar model for parsing out growth in a way that is motivating, and that moves us quickly and intentionally toward indicators of success and morale boosting, realistic outcomes.

¹Edmondson, A. C. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Adm. Sci. Q.* 44, 350–383.

Edmondson, A. C., Higgins, M., Singer, S., and Weiner, J. (2016). Understanding psychological safety in health care and education organizations: a comparative perspective. *Res. Human Dev.* 13, 65–83.

Wanless, S. B., Patton, C. L., Rimm-Kaufman, S. E., and Deutsch, N. L. (2013). Setting-level influences on implementation of the responsive classroom approach. *Prevent. Sci.* 14, 40–51.

Weiner, J. M. (2016). Under my thumb: principals' difficulty releasing decision-making to their instructional leadership team. *J. School Leadership* 26, 334–364.

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Like our Critical Learner groups, in this season, our school community is “at promise” in many ways, and is in need of some specialized and intentional, differentiated intervention to propel us toward a strong and successful second semester and future. Like our Critical Learners there are new growth goals and milestones that will need to be set at the semester turn, and like our Critical Learners, there are high expectations for growth and progressive movement toward the ultimate goal that will be designed and refined in alignment with dynamic data. I am dedicating strategic thinking time to this work, and will share updated goals with the Board in an upcoming report. In the next pages of this report you will learn more about the progress, challenges, and next steps associated with our Black/African American student intervention programming and with our Special Education programming. When engaging the text, please keep in mind the connection to our larger programming and approach to learning.

One of my favorite quotes says: *“The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change. The leader adjusts the sails.”* One of the most rewarding things for me as a leader during this season has been supporting and witnessing our leaders as they rise up, flourish, and adjust sails, when necessary, allowing us not only to weather, but to thrive through challenge, change, and unknown territory. In addition to stepping in to teach, stepping in to be an acting Dean, and stepping in to manage and facilitate family engagement, with the support of my remaining and highly committed Senior School Leaders and their teams, I have been able to support the accomplishment of some major milestones and programmatic compliance deliverables that I am proud to share with the Board:

Programmatic Compliance:

- ESSER III plan and refinements completed
- Educator Effectiveness Block Grant Spending Plan completed
- Educational Partners (formerly termed “Stakeholder”) Engagement for all Plans
- LCAP milestones toward annual goals on track
- CCCOE LCAP Presentation completed
- College Applications completed
- Civil Rights compliance tasks on track
- WASC compliance tasks on track

Family Engagement

- Launched and facilitated Coffee Talks & Chat and Chews at start of Q2
- Launched Family PMSC training
- Held ESSER III Family engagement workshops
- Launched Parent Academy certification program
- Hosted Nominations for SSC parent representatives
- Launched parent advisory committee meetings for ELAC and BAAPAC
- Started 3-month at a glance calendars for families

Academic Instruction & Support

- Updated grading system
- Updated PD calendar to support content and grade level collaboration
- Launched Grade Level Leaders in Q2
- Instituted Support Clusters meetings for Grade Level Leaders and Holistic Support Services Team members
- Re-launched My Very Own Library participation
- Re-launched National History Day participation
- Launched Academic Mentoring with BAASAI

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Student Engagement & Support

- Re-established Crisis Prevention and Response Team (CPRT) meetings
- Instituted contingency plans for leadership gaps on the Holistic Support Services Team and the College and Career Counseling team
- Revamped the Director of School Culture position
- Hosted our first outside student event: Fall Festival
- Hosted our first outside Rally: Honoring Men's Soccer NCS Championship win
- Launched first school-wide Day of Lights plans

Black/African American Student Achievement Initiative (B/AASAI)

Ka'Dijah Brown, B/AASAI Coordinator

Introduction

The **Black and African American Student Achievement Initiative (B/AASAI)** is an initiative that came to pass as a response to:

- Black student achievement data
- the CA Department of Education's accountability measures that put MWA in Program Improvement some years ago (due to African American students not showing academic gains aligned with their Latinx, Asian, and white peers)
- our school's responsibility to better serve and support that specific subgroup of students as critical learners.

B/AASAI, as a program, is led under the umbrella of the **Academic Support Services Team (ASST)**, and it reports out to **Academic Intervention Services (AIS)** which is a group of teachers, leaders, and consultants who monitor, assess, and provide recommendations for our schools **Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²)** and **Multiple Tier Support Services (MTSS)** with the intent of increasing assessment performance and learning outcomes for critical student learner subgroups. In regards to the aforementioned, B/AASAI is a service initiative in likeness to **English Language Development (ELD)**, **Gifted and Talented Education (GATE)**, **Special Education (SPED)**, and **Major Student Learners for Math/ELA (Tier 3)**. Each of these various intervention-based subgroups have specific programming that is targeted at best serving the learners involved. Sometimes that includes culturally relevant and responsive pedagogical and curricular approaches, and sometimes it includes unique and alternative methods for engagement. No matter the approach, it is researched, vetted, and approved for implementation.

What?

On behalf of the Black/African American Student Achievement Initiative (B/AASAI) committee, it is a great privilege to provide the MWA Board of Directors with an update regarding the progress of the initiative. During last year's presentation to the Board, two critical goals were shared: 1) launching academic mentoring and 2) establishing a family advisory committee. This year, we are proud to update the Board on the progress of these goals and share our current goals for the academic year 2021-2022.

Returning to campus after the extended period of remote learning (intensified by the intersecting impacts of COVID-19, continued Shelter-In-Place orders, and the amplified demands for racial justice), the urgency of the initiative has never felt greater. As such, the Black/African American Student Achievement Initiative (B/AASAI), continues to prioritize providing our Black/African American students with supplemental academic support and opportunities to deepen their

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sense of community at Making Waves Academy. In order to accomplish this, B/AASAI has developed three critical goals for the 2021-2022 academic year:

- 1) Implement a holistic approach to educating our Black and African-American scholars.
- 2) Increase educational and engagement opportunities for families.
- 3) Expand professional development offerings for faculty and staff.

So What?

Goal 1: Implement a holistic approach to educating our Black and African-American scholars.

B/AASAI Mentorship Program

Last school year B/AASAI launched an opt-in, academy-wide academic mentoring program for Black/African American Wave-Makers. The B/AASAI mentor program is asset-based, reflective, and grounded in the Preparing the Mind for Success and Competition (PMSC) framework, aligning with MWA's broader Social-Emotional Learning program. Last year, nine (9) wave-makers participated in the mentorship program. Students ranged from the 5th grade to the 10th grade, with the bulk of participation in the 7th and 8th grade. While participating in the mentorship program, students attended individualized mentoring sessions that occurred weekly for approximately 45 minutes. During mentoring sessions, mentors and mentees explored student's strengths, examples of resilience, fueled and focused Wave-Maker's Life Dreams, and problem-solved current academic challenges. Last year B/AASAI's goal was to expand student participation, and ensure the mentorship program is marketed to our full Black/African American student body, not just students requiring Tier 3 intervention, as initially proposed. We envisioned a model that could support upward of 50-60 students. We are excited to announce that we have met and exceeded this goal. This year, participation in the mentorship program has increased by 611%. Currently, sixty-four (64) Wave-Makers have been matched with a mentor for the mentorship program. These students range from the 5th to the 12th grade. We also experienced expansion in the number of mentors in the program, with mentors comprised of both faculty and staff. The outpouring of support from MWA faculty, staff and leadership allowed this goal to become a reality.

Because so much was accomplished for the nine students who participated in the mentorship program last year, the expansion of the program was vital this year, and urgency of our work is clearly reflected in the mid-semester Black/African American student data. The three data points below demonstrate the impact chronic absenteeism has on student academic success and highlight the pivots B/AASAI plans to make as we develop differentiated pathways for support tailored to specific students needs.

- **Current Student Enrollment** - Black/African American students account for 8.66% (97/1,119) of the academy's student enrollment.
- **Current Chronic Absenteeism** - 67% (65/97) of our Black/African American students are chronically absent during S1. Black/African American students experienced a chronically absent rate 10.3% higher than the academy average (21.3%). Chronic absence is defined as the percent of students absent 10% or more days enrolled. (Schoolzilla)
- **Current Course Failure by Grading Period** - 62.9% (61/97) of our Black/African American students failed one or more of their core courses during S1. Black/African American students experienced a higher course failure rate than the academy average (50.4%).

Upon review of our Black/African American students' current data, there is a throughline between each of the above data sets. Many of our Black/African American students are experiencing continued barriers to attending class regularly. As

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such, these students missed cohesiveness in their instruction, making it very challenging for them to demonstrate the content mastery required to successfully pass their core courses.

Now What

As the B/AASAI committee continues to modify current academic supports and engagement opportunities provided to Black/African American Wave-Makers and their families, we are mindful of impacts to the student experience. These include, but are not limited to both the short-term and long-term impacts of the pandemic, the ongoing adaptation and adjustment brought forth by the return to campus, as well as experiences of social and cultural isolation. As such, it is critical that our current supports and services are visible and easily accessible to students, families, and faculty. We will continue to:

- **Expand** outreach for students to participate in the B/AASAI Academic Mentoring program
- **Increase** professional development opportunities for faculty and staff
- **Continue** our partnership with the academy's Black Student Union
- **Launch** intentional professional development opportunities for faculty and staff
- **Recommend** a full-time B/AASAI coordinator to maximize student support and program development

Goal 1: Implement a Holistic Approach to Educating our Black and African-American scholars.

Black Student Union

The B/AASAI committee continues to be mindful of both the short-term and long-term social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with pre-pandemic reports of social and cultural isolation here on campus. As such, the B/AASAI committee has increased engagement opportunities for Black/African American Wave-Makers through the Black Student Union. Under the direction of Ms. Glenn (MS), Mr. Gordon (MS), Mr. Amey (MS) and Ms. Muhammad (US), the Black Student Union serves as a safe space where Black and African-American students can build community, develop pride in oneself, and discuss topics on race and other areas of social justice.

Goal 2: Increase Education and Engagement Opportunities for Families.

Over the last few years, the academy has experienced a continued increase in the representation of Black/African American parent leadership as well as an ongoing need to educate the broader community regarding the purpose and expectations of the initiative, to this end we have expanded our education and engagement opportunities for our families.

Learning Sessions

The B/AASAI committee understands the importance of continued education and engagement for stakeholders and have launched learning sessions for our Black and African-American families. We began the school year by hosting an orientation for families on Back To School Day. During the family meeting, we were able to gauge family concerns, share our calendar and programming for the year, and most importantly, ensure families left with contact information for each B/AASAI committee member. In response to real-time family feedback and the continued goals of the initiative.

Listening Circles

The B/AASAI committee has launched monthly listening circles for our Black and African-American families. The family listening circles are designed to deepen relationships within our Black/African American family community, learn more about the experience of both families and students on campus, and nurture the partnership required for families to feel

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comfortable making critical recommendations via our School Site Council. Additionally, listening circles also serve as a space to build community and strong communication between families with shared experiences.

Family Game Nights

In an effort to foster community during this period of extended isolation and prolonged stress, the B/AASAI committee will continue to host game nights beginning in Semester 2 for Black/African American students and their families. These events provide an opportunity for families to informally connect with members of the B/AASAI committee, relate with each other, and have some virtual fun. Many families have expressed an appreciation for the opportunity to have fun with the community and ask questions of school leaders.

Goal 3: Increase Professional Development Opportunities for Faculty and Staff.

The B/AASAI committee understands the importance of ongoing professional development for our faculty and staff. In Semester 2 we plan to continue our partnership with the African-American Regional Educational Alliances by attending the 13th annual AAREA Professional Development Summit. Additionally, the B/AASAI committee plans to host three onsite professional development training sessions to MWA faculty and staff focusing on black student achievement, cultivating genius, and addressing implicit bias.

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Special Education

Karen Snider, Director of Special Education

What?

Return to In Person Learning

Due to anticipated COVID learning loss, the middle school (MS) division Special Education Department made a schedule change to allow for increased support service minutes. Under the new MS block schedule, MS division resource teachers (RSP) were able to increase their service minutes from 140 minutes per week (pre-pandemic) to 240 minutes of RSP Differentiated Tiered Instruction (DTI) time per week. Once we returned to school, teachers found that overall students with IEPs have made significant improvement in grades, work production, and engagement. Being back on campus has enabled RSP teachers to have more teacher to teacher interaction time to train faculty on accommodations and explain students qualifying disabilities and how best to support student needs. In RSP there has been a concerted effort to focus on building a student's growth mindset through positive affirmations.

Increased Staffing

Since becoming our own LEA and leaving WCCUSD in 2019, MWA has grown it's in-house special education staff from 5 faculty/staff members (2019-20) to 11 faculty/staff members (2021-22). In the 2021-22 AY, SPED onboarded their first Special Education Teacher Resident in the Middle School. MWA has increased the number of special education teachers to 2 per division (4 total- 2 MS, 2 US) as well as increasing the number of instructional aides supporting RSP teachers, small group support, and individual student support.

Staffing Challenges

Unfortunately, the pandemic staffing challenges have impacted the special education department similarly to the staffing challenges impacting schools and special education departments in the Bay Area. SPED had an upper school (US) RSP teacher vacancy in 11th/12th grade for semester 1. This was covered by the Director of Special Education. Additionally, the MS teacher team had hoped to expand from 2 teachers to 3 in order to meet the growing MS SPED population and increased number of students in the MS with significant learning needs. The 11th/12th grade teacher vacancy has been filled for S2, however the MS 3rd teacher position remains unfilled. The SPED department has also been impacted by staffing challenges with our outside occupational therapist provider. MWA's contract Non Public Agency (NPA) partners suffer from staffing shortages similar to the one's the education world is facing at large. MWA is still trying to staff outside reading and math specialist partners to provide specialized academic interventions for students with significant modified learning needs (5 grade levels behind or more).

Covid Learning Impact

- Increased retention of students with IEPs in the upper school (5 students retained from 2020-21 .
- Decreased graduation rates from pre-pandemic rates (100% of students with IEPs graduated in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020) to 33% of students with IEPs graduating in June 2021.)
 - 2 additional students with IEPs are anticipated to graduate at the end of semester 1 (December 2021) following a semester of credit recovery.
- Students are further behind than before the pandemic. On average, pre-pandemic students with IEPs were 2-3 grade levels behind their general education peers entering MWA in 5th grade. Now, many students with IEPs are 3-5 + years behind.
- Increased Special Education evaluations due to students potentially not being identified in 3rd and 4th grade during COVID.

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Semester 1 Data

Attendance			
<i>General Education</i>		<i>Special Education</i>	
All Students	87.3% ADA		
Middle School Students	84.7% ADA	MS Students with IEPs	83.4% ADA
Upper School Students	90.6% ADA	US Students with IEPs	86.1% ADA

Chronic Absenteeism (*Impacted by COVID quarantines)			
<i>General Education</i>		<i>Special Education</i>	
All Students	53.6%		
Middle School Students	67.5%	MS Students with IEPs	71.7%
Upper School Students	33.0%	US Students with IEPs	44.4%

NWEA Math MAP August 2021 Baseline			
<i>General Education</i> MAP at or above 50th percentile		<i>Special Education</i> MAP at or above 50th percentile	
All Students	20.5%		
Middle School Students	14.3%	MS Students with IEPs	5.4%
Upper School Students	31.3%	US Students with IEPs	16.1%

Academic Achievement Baseline Data			
Special Education MAP Math August 2021 Baseline Data *5th and 7th grade baseline data impacted by quarantines.		Special Education STAR August 2021 Baseline Data	
		5th-12th Grade Stus with IEPs	86% are reading 3+ grade levels behind
6th Grade Students with IEPs	91% of students are 3+ grade levels behind in math	6th Grade Students with IEPs	82% are reading 3+ grade levels behind
8th Grade Students with IEPs	83.3% of students are 3+ grade levels behind in math	8th Grade Students with IEPs	75% are reading 3+ grade levels behind
9th and 10th Grade Students with IEPs	95% of students are 3+ grade levels behind in math	9th & 10th Grade Stus. w/ IEPs	95% of students are reading 3+ grade levels behind
11th & 12th Gr. Status. w/ IEPs	94% of students are 3+ grade levels behind in math	11th & 12th Gr. Stus. w/ IEPs	94% of students are reading 3+ grade levels behind

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So What?

Reading and Math Intervention

The SPED department has focused on **increased reading and math intervention** during RSP support period time to combat covid learning loss. Reading interventions in the 5th grade include phonics for reading, Mobymax, vocabulary practice and EL programs that have support from Teachers pay teachers. 7th grade reading interventions have increased and STAR data is being collected more frequently. Math interventions have increased as well as push in support with Math teachers in 7th grade. Also more collaboration with 7th grade teachers for modifications.

6th and 8th Grade reading intervention is focused on small group station work. At stations, students engage in direct homogeneous small group 1:1 reading intervention with their RSP teacher, read independently working on Reading A-Z goals, and get support with general education reading and writing work with their instructional aide.

US Reading Intervention in RSP is literature based for Semester 1, with the additional tools of Lexia Power Up (online reading platform). Students in 9th and 10th grade have been reading Burro; while students in 11th and 12th grade have been reading Maus. Students are reading novels and graphic novels during RSP to engage in reading, practicing reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and verbal/written discussion. RSP has been utilizing IXL math platform to target remediation skills, and remediating US math course work and Algebra remediation.

General Education Collaboration

SPED works with general education teachers to provide push-in support in classes needed and to provide support with classes with behavior issues. SPED has provided consistent support for classes with substitutes (ex:9th grade English/Spanish) and close monitoring of students' progress in online S1 courses (Biology, Physics, Government) . In 5th grade, SPED Content Lead and behavior specialist has provided behavior management training professional development to support GE teachers with in person behavior management and classroom behavior trends. Once the SPED department knows about behavior concerns, the team is able to create proactive support for teachers.

MWA's SELPA has recommended new **transition compliance guidelines** in response to new legal proceedings surrounding students with IEPs transition plans. US RSP attended multiple professional development compliance training to learn about the changes to transition plans. Based on the changes, US SPED has begun to implement changes. Additionally, US RSP is working with the CCC (US-monthly check-in starting in January 2022.) to increase SPED/CCC collaboration with IEP transition plan forms and increasing students with IEPs college and career awareness services.

Semester 1 Challenges

- **Increased student need:** There has been a significant increase in students with diverse learning disabilities, behaviors, and modified learning plans. There is a large gap in learning levels in the RSP classroom with students qualifying with significant learning challenges mixed with low average student needs. Behavior response processes are inadequate for immediate support needs (slow response times). SPED teachers have seen an increase in IEP paperwork, students requiring assessments that were not done previously during covid from the previous school/district.
- **Student Absences:** While attendance has improved dramatically compared to distance learning levels, we are not at a pre pandemic attendance level due to quarantine learning and additional family absences. This has led to a disruption in students' academic progress and outside services (ex: speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, adaptive PE, and counseling sessions).

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- **General Education Teacher Collaboration:** A lack of grade level meetings negatively impacted SPED's ability to address special education student concerns and collaborate consistently with general education teachers in a dedicated time and space. Teacher burnout has frequently led to teacher no shows at IEP meetings and many teachers are not providing information on student performance before IEP meetings.
- **Behavioral Challenges:** Semester 1 saw an increase in all student behavioral challenges and a lack of consistent school wide behavior expectations. This has led to disruptions in the learning environment.
- **General Education Intervention:** A lack of consistent, targeted and effective general education interventions (Tier 3, SSTs, 504 plans) to support struggling students following the pandemic is leading to an increase of SPED referrals and SPED led interventions for general education students.

Now What?

Semester 2 Pivots

- **US Schedule Change:** US RSP restructure to decrease support for students who need a less restrictive environment and increasing support minutes through SPED Marlin Hours. This will allow for increased support with general education course work AND increased reading and math intervention during RSP time. US RSP is going to be doing weekly *Transmath* remediation lessons to focus on building foundational skills and problem solving strategies. *Transmath* is designed for students who are two or more years below grade level on standardized assessments and lacking the foundational skills necessary to be successful in Algebra 1, Algebra 2, and Geometry.
- **Modified Curriculum:** SPED is focusing on providing General Education teachers with additional opportunities to collaborate on modifying curriculum for qualifying students.
- **MS SPED:** Implement reading and math specialist for incoming students with significant learning needs and purchase additional reading and math resources to support students with higher needs.
- **Reading Intervention:** SPED collaboration with DAIs and Intervention to look into reading assessment tools to provide the school with increased tools to assess students reading ability, measure reading growth, and monitor reading intervention effectiveness.
- **Quarantine Learning:** Continue to support students with IEPs with education access, learning support, and other IEP services during quarantines to minimize impact of student absences on academic progress.