



Board Report
School-Wide

Board Report - January 2022

From the Senior School Director's Desk

Dr. E. Ward-Jackson

This has been a tough school year for our faculty and staff. Navigating through being short-staffed, attempting to maintain visibility, accessibility, and responsiveness, while having some quality continuity of teaching and learning has proven difficult amongst expectations that are set on “gold standard” as opposed to “good enough”, heightened student behavior challenges, parent conflict and challenging teacher engagement, longstanding trust and culture issues, and gaps in key support and leadership positions.

After the week 1 delayed school opening we launched a school-wide Thrive@Home program for continuity of student engagement. We then prepared for a temporary independent study offering that began the week of 1/17/22. As promised in my last report, I provided a review of our initial priorities for the year in a detailed supplementary report. In this report I share some of the pivots, and specifically some of the things that we are doing well, some challenges, and some key areas of focus for the next 8 weeks in response to the board engagement with staff report.

Quite optimistically, in our September Board Report, I shared with you that I had launched the school year by defining the mindset that would be important to take on as we embarked upon a school year that promised to be challenging. Taking on a growth mindset with two very important drivers, Fortitude and Resilience, would assist us in accepting the charge of our CEO's call to focus on what is good enough, versus what is gold standard by illuminating quality over perfection. Many plans for prioritization and de-prioritization, along with student onboarding and support and teacher and family engagement were made, but fidelity to the plans, and in many cases implementation of the plans, experienced either a halt, a revamp, or a contingency plan due to early term resignations, leaves and extended leaves, Covid quarantines of leaders, as well as the reallocation of key leaders to teaching. My failure to adequately anticipate and plan for the tremendous hole in supervision, oversight, and programmatic fidelity that these external factors would cause, has only intensified the core pain points of our faculty, stretched my capacity, and has added to the revolving cycle of recovery during one of the most challenging seasons of our lifetime.

Focus Area: Responsiveness to Data from Board Staff Engagement Data

What's going well/Successes:

- Academic Instruction and Ops team collaborated on a reset effort for the Semester 2 launch
- Deans and Grade Level Leads have partnered on a cutting policy and communication plan
- I collaborated with Senior School Leadership, Academic Instruction, Holistic Services, and the Senior School Director Task Force on prioritizing response efforts
 - Staff feedback is consistent with feedback shared in open sessions, circle-up with Ward-Jackson meetings, and the task force. To that end some plans, specific to communication, student behavior, and support were underway ahead of the Semester 1 close.
- I held two faculty meetings within the first 3 weeks of school with the objective of having all faculty leave the space having provided input, feeling involved, and ready for the upcoming week
- 100% attendance at faculty meetings
- All questions answered in session or in writing following consultation with the CEO, COO, CFO, and Senior Director of Academic Instruction

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- Sr. Director of Academic Instruction has worked to design a one-stop-shop, Google site for remote engagement with Wave-Makers that captures all communications to staff on one site: [Thrive@Home Faculty Hub](#)

What are the challenges:

- *My timeline for processing, planning, and execution didn't reflect the urgency of response needed, due in part to:*
 - My need for strategic thinking time and thought partnership
 - Unanticipated end of S1 resignations from key leaders (Dean, Director of Academic Instruction, Teacher Leader).
 - Back to back personal bereavement
 - Reallocation of time to support critical needs (Dean's office and IEPs)--wondering if I had sought out support sooner regarding how to best prioritize, both these needs and my capacity, might we be in a better place as a school community.
 - Cancellation of 1/7 SSD PD due to school closure associated with Covid Omicron surge. This was supposed to be a very important PD, aimed at setting up the new semester, sharing tactical outcomes in response to the Board Engagement feedback, and encouraging hope and energy for the work ahead.
 - Lost momentum for on-site reset due to remote S2 start. In Q2 we attempted a "reboot" of the school year that was intended to recommit Wave-Makers and staff to our longstanding practices. This did not go fully as planned. For semester 2 we have planned a "reset" that will introduce some new practices and procedures that are designed to respond to the top student behavior concerns.
- **Marlin Hour/Intervention**
 - Inconsistent use of time and inconsistent programming for students who are not designated as ELD, Tier 3, or SPED students
 - Increased volume of students cutting class and student behavioral infractions that impact having consistent and effective student intervention class time
- **Deans**
 - Losing key departmental leaders mid-year. Some critical knowledge and practices were lost with the departures
 - Effective partnership and collaboration with faculty
 - Broad demand for professional development from the Dean's Office
 - Overwhelmed by departmental shifts and are primary organizers of Advisory curriculum and programming
 - Increased volume of student support needs
- **Teachers**
 - Not receiving materials with enough prep time
 - materials often too middle school-centric
 - not enough time in session
 - Identifying and onboarding a prepared Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum, especially considering varying requests for Advisory time (Check-ins, Social-Emotional Programming, College Access, Community Building, Response to internal and external community happenings such as racial injustices, Covid implications, and REP review

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- **Communication**

- Not sharing out information broadly enough. For example, every functional area created a chart of what their area was prioritizing and de-prioritizing, but this was not shared out to the faculty.
- Not a central location or clear procedure for how to get communication. This often places teachers in the difficult situation of learning information from students first, or not knowing how to best respond to students
- Lack of clarity on who, how, and when decisions are made
- Desire from teachers and leaders for more input on decision making
- Consideration and communication regarding programmatic changes and impact on After School program
- New Teacher and Substitute onboarding and induction. Plans not shared broadly enough.
- Appreciation, celebration, and community building activities are not prioritized during this season, but it is something that our faculty needs and wants. It will also help to strengthen the school culture, build relationships, trust, and a sense of belonging.

- **Professional Development**

- Differentiating between Professional Development and Faculty meetings
 - Having and making clear opportunities for relevant PD
 - Not having designated time for faculty meetings where teachers can just talk with leaders and peers. Prioritizing the time to talk and connect is very important to our faculty and is something that has been deprioritized.
- No time for Teacher leaders to collaborate because of increased supervision duties
- Adult social-emotional development
- No/Inconsistent/Confusing trainings on student discipline

Key Priorities for Next 8 Weeks:

- Revamp PD Calendar to include grade level and content area collaboration
 - Secure, calendar, and share out staff PD's from community partners on mindfulness & wellness, restorative practices and PMSC
 - Using the parent engagement model, design a schedule of input, feedback, and engagement for faculty and staff on programmatic compliance and grants in alignment with the PD calendar.
- Hiring and onboarding new staff
 - Refine and share induction playlist for onboarding staff and contingency plans for vacated leadership positions
- Formally introduce the new role of Director of School Culture
 - Prioritize standard detention practice and restorative activities
 - Prioritize community building and standardized student activities and engagement practices, protocols, and procedures across the Academy
 - Implement success indicator tracking for the Director of School Culture work
- Formally share new Dean of Student focus areas and communication plan
 - Implement success indicator tracking for the work of the Deans' Office
 - Expanding Dean's office
- Task Force focus on: [Our Futures Project](#)

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- This work began in November and is approaching the stage where Task force members will share with groups of their peers.
- Task force will also prioritize work on a staff version of the affirmation and defining a collection of behaviors and norms for the ideal staff culture
- Task force will retain meetings as spaces to have courageous conversations; where time is spent in the problem space and the commitment of the Task force to surface solutions is upheld. Time in Friday Professional Development will be secured for Impact Circles
- Calendaring Staff Community building activities for the semester
- Confirm and implement redesign of Marlin Hour/Intervention and any associated schedule change
- Confirm and re-allocate leadership of Advisory
- Plan and design programmatic and schedule recommendations for the Spring Curriculum Review Committee meeting
- Tighten systems and protocols around scheduling, grading, proposals, and behavior interventions—document, and partner with the CEO on appropriate housing and custodian for such institutional knowledge.

All of the key priorities for the next 8 weeks will be accomplished with a collaborative approach. Performance and success indicators will include surveys, project plan tracking, as well as qualitative feedback opportunities.

There are two critical areas connected to student wellness and engagement that will be highlighted in the remainder of this report. Our Social Work Department and the Athletics department will walk through their analysis of what is happening in their areas, share data that helps to paint the picture of the student support needs and participation, and finally a glimpse into what is next for these very important areas of engagement as we are in the middle of the Omicron variant surge.

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Social Work Department

Rachel Navarro, Lead Social Worker

What?

Disruption of Child Development

“The COVID-19 global pandemic and the resulting economic, health, and educational disruptions have upset all aspects of young people’s lives. The pandemic’s reach will likely continue in the near term and as psychological and academic trajectories unfold over time” (Child Development During the COVID-19 Pandemic Through a Life Course Theory Lens, Oct. 2020).

The 2021-22 Academic Year began with our Making Waves community (among other school communities in the nation) struggling with integrating into the current “new normal”. Student challenges such as behavior management, loss of learning, decrease in social skills, grief and loss and family stressors made it difficult for some of our Wave Makers to focus and build positive relationships in the wake of a global pandemic. With staffing issues and lack of student motivation, the Holistic Support Services Department experienced an increase in student referrals, families in need of resources and teachers needing additional support when managing classroom behavior. In order to fill staffing gaps such as the departure of the Holistic Support Services Director, Senior Dean, 7th-9th grade dean and lack of teachers, the team took on additional department responsibilities and found themselves as substitutes in the classroom. As social workers, it is our ethical responsibility and compassionate nature to help those in need, but how do we care for others, when we, as humans, have also experienced the toll of what COVID has done? In addressing our community needs, we moved forward with the expansion of the social work department, in the hopes that having access to additional skilled professionals would give our students more safe spaces to develop/enhance coping strategies, explore feelings and set goals for themselves.

So What?

Staffing and Intentional Services

For the 2021-22 Academic year, as part of a larger Holistic Support Services model shift, organized its social worker and dean support around a “cluster model” of support. Clusters are based on clustering grade levels that are more social-emotionally similar in terms of age and developmentally- appropriate challenges and support strategies - 5th-6th, 7th-9th, and 10th-12th grades. A dean and social worker are assigned to support a specific cluster. They can then meet regularly to compare notes, share information, and consult on serving the same cluster of students, allowing opportunities to identify any patterns of behavior or potential interventions affecting specific clusters of students.

In preparation for this new approach and proactively preparing to address an increase in community needs, the Social Work Department increased staff by hiring an additional Social Worker and Student Supports Coordinator. The department is now comprised of a 5th-6th grade social worker (Angelica Maulucci, ASW), 7th-9th grade social worker (Diamond McMillian, ASW), Student Supports Coordinator (Adeline Alvarado, MWA alumnus, Wave-Maker, and MSW candidate) and Lead and 10th-12th grade social worker (Rachel Navarro, ASW). In efforts to provide intentional supports and services, the team participates in the Multi-Tiered Support Services (MTSS) framework by collaborating with multidisciplinary teams such as the Deans Department, SPED Services, Faculty and staff, outside community providers and our Clinical Psychological Services Provider, Fruge’ Psychological Associates (FPA).

During the beginning of the 21-22 AY, the social workers supported students in managing various needs and presenting problems. Emotional dysregulation was one of the highest areas of concern for many of our wave-makers, regardless of age or demographics. This dysregulation was displayed through anxiety attacks, anger outbursts, disassociation, and lack of motivation. The impact of the pandemic contributed to the many ongoing challenges our students are faced with such as trauma, community violence, poverty, grief and other mental health concerns, including depression.

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Social Work Dashboard: 8/16/21-11/30/22

Disaggregated Cluster Information

Type of service	# of times Initiated			Grand Total
	5th-6th	7th-9th	10th-12th	All Grades
	333 Students Enrolled	506 Students Enrolled	288 Students Enrolled	1,127 Students
Unduplicated # of Students Seen	104	73	52	229
Student Contacts (including number of sessions)	491	170	146	807
Caseload (includes 1:1 counseling and case management)	45	21	17	83
Groups	1	0	0	1
Suspected Child Abuse Report	1	0	0	1
Safety and Risk Assessment (suicide asesement, safety plans, Gaggle alerts)	23	29	6	48
Teacher/Staff Consultation	13	6	15	34
Parent/Guardian Consultation	89	8	5	102
Psychiatric Hospitalization	0	0	0	0
Return to School Meetings	7	10	0	17
Police Reports	0	0	0	0
Parent Presentations	1	1	1	3
SST/504/IEP Meetings	12	4	5	21

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Now What?

Resilience

“Resilience is known as the process of adaptation while enduring hardship and adversity. We all are wired so we’re capable of cultivating it. That comes through deliberate action, through mindsets, attitudes and behavior” (Laurio, 2020).

The social work team aims to support our wave-makers in:

- Building resilience through enhancing and developing coping skills in order to function in a world that is constantly changing and unpredictable
- Providing opportunities to grow the skills necessary for managing emotions will give our students the tools to address daily stressors as they develop into young adulthood.

Through one on one counseling sessions, consultations with staff and families and collaboration with outside providers, the social workers utilize their sense of self, knowledge and experience to serve in a developmentally appropriate manner to meet their clients needs.

As we continue to provide services, the social workers will address needs through:

- Ongoing assessments of student behaviors and skills through:
 - One on one sessions
 - Utilization of scaling questions
 - Decrease in behavior management issues
- Working on client goals to include but not limited to:
 - Enhancing coping skills for emotional regulation
 - Address and process trauma
- Meeting with collaborative partners
- Triaging and prioritizing the highest levels of concerns.

I meet frequently with the team to explore challenges, collect data, and review best practices in utilizing tailored interventions.

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Athletics

Jeff Hazel, Athletic Director

What?

Upper School Athletics started the school year with the sports we have offered in the past in our [Fall Season](#)

Team	Student Athletes	Team GPAs & Eligibility
Varsity Boys Soccer	22 players	3.1 team GPA in 2nd Quarter (2 ineligible players)
JV Boys Soccer	13 players (including 6 Varsity players to fill out the team)	3.11 Team GPA in 2nd Quarter
Varsity Girls Volleyball	10 players	3.57 team GPA in 2nd Quarter
JV Girls Volleyball	9 players	3.65 team GPA in 2nd Quarter
Boys Cross Country	15 runners	3.36 team GPA in 2nd Quarter (1 ineligible runner)
Girls Cross Country	3 runners	3.78 team GPA in 2nd Quarter

The numbers were smaller than in the past for our JV Boys Soccer team (we had some of the underclassmen from the Varsity team playing on the JV team so the JV team can have a full squad) and the JV team not participating in their league this season (because Varsity and JV games were played on the same dates).

The Cross Country team continued hosting their own meet with some of the other BCL schools running a course that begins and ends in the parking lot of the MWA Foundation and runs through Hilltop Lake Park and around the lake. It is a great site to watch a meet from as one can see much of the course from the start/finish area up on the hill. The home meet also allows our team to have a Senior meet truly at home.

The Girls Varsity Volleyball team had a successful season finishing with a .500 record and making it to their league playoffs for only the 2nd time in school history.

And the Boys Varsity Soccer team won both their league title and Making Waves' first section championship (after 5 previous losses in the finals) beating Fortuna 4-1 in the North Coast Section finals. This allowed the school to have their first gathering of the entire school together by having an outside Championship Rally in the Courtyard. It was great to have the whole school together and the players enjoyed presenting the trophy and banner to the school community, participating in a few rally games (the girls team beat the boys team in a heading contest so there are still things to work on for our boys), hearing and participating in school cheers, and taking pictures with the trophy and banner. Fun was had by all the students.

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This Winter Season of Upper School Athletics

Team	Student Athletes	Team GPAs & Eligibility
Boys Varsity Basketball	13 players	3.01 team GPA in 2nd Quarter (3 ineligible players)
Boys JV Basketball	12 players	2.97 team GPA in 2nd Quarter (3 ineligible players)
Girls Varsity Basketball	12 players	2.88 team GPA in 2nd Quarter (3 ineligible players)
Girls Varsity Soccer	18 players	3.31 team GPA in 2nd Quarter (3 ineligible players)
Cheer	22 cheerleaders	3.14 team GPA in 2nd Quarter (4 ineligible cheerleaders)

In the past we have had enough for a Girls JV basketball team but not this school year.

The first half of the season has encountered no Covid issues, but since Winter vacation we, and many of our league opponents, have experienced challenges due to the Omicron surge:

- Schools not in person
- Schools not playing sports during the surge
- Schools having Covid quarantines of their team
- Schools not having enough Covid-free players to field a team
- Getting our players to school for practice since we have been off campus since Winter vacation

The teams practiced the week of January 10th and will begin playing games again the week of January 17th.

On the plus side, we began allowing vaccinated fans to our home basketball games (after not allowing any fans but our own students at home Volleyball games in the Fall) as well as having our Varsity Boys Basketball team play in the Pescadero tournament and finish third; our girls finished fifth. Also the Boys Varsity basketball team played in Ft. Bragg's tournament the week between Christmas and New Year's (teams had dropped out due to Covid concerns and we were asked to fill one of the open spots) and the players enjoyed the experience and chance to get away and bond as a team. Over 40 students tried out for our Cheer squad and are looking forward to getting a chance to cheer at a basketball game. Our girls soccer team is competing in the winter season for the first time participating in the BCL-East league as the spring has very few girls soccer teams any more (less than 20 in the entire section)

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For the Spring sports season we anticipate having Baseball, Softball, Boys Volleyball, Track and Field, and an E-Sports team again.

The Middle School sports seasons have been adjusted somewhat to address Covid concerns and in the Fall season the following sports played:

Team	Student Athletes	Team GPAs & Eligibility
Boys Soccer	20 players (with over 40 boys trying out)	3.21 team GPA in 1st Quarter (2 ineligible players)
Girls Soccer <i>[Was played in the Winter/Spring previously]</i>	18 players (with over 35 girls trying out)	3.28 team GPA in 1st Quarter (1 ineligible player)
Girls Volleyball	16 players and 2 teams (and over 40 girls trying out)	3.37 team GPA in 1st Quarter (1 ineligible player)

The Boys and Girls soccer teams participated in the City of Richmond Middle School Charter School league with games played at MLK Memorial Park. The Girls finished in 4th place in the league and the Boys finished in second place, losing in the finals 3-1 but earning a trophy which is on display in the Middle School Main Office. The 2 Volleyball teams played a few games in the fall as they waited for the Middle School Charter School league to start in late January/early February (Covid permitting). They have been practicing all fall semester and cannot wait to start their league. The goal is to have Middle School basketball in the spring after the Volleyball league season finishes.

So What?

As mentioned, the numbers of our US athletes is a little lower than in the past. In particular our sophomore class is not participating in athletics as much as the other classes. My guess is that when the sophomores were frosh, MWA was not having in-person classes (2020-21 school year) and, while MWA did have a shortened and out of season sports season last school year, the frosh numbers were very low (only 8 frosh participated in athletics last school year):

- They were not on campus, they were unaware of the sports offering because we did not have student word of mouth communication
- They did not have transportation to school in the afternoon
- Families had safety concerns about their children playing sports.

We did not have enough girls this winter for a JV Basketball team which could be attributed partly to Girls Soccer moving to the Winter season of sports.

Now What?

Many of our coaches have ramped up out of season conditioning to help get our players ready as well. There are over 25 baseball and softball players working out 3 days a week to get ready for their spring seasons and our Boys Volleyball team would like to have Open Gym when the basketball teams are playing away games, but that hasn't happened due to no in-person school since break. The Cheerleaders are hoping to cheer at home basketball games, but out of abundance of caution, we have adjusted to having no fans again for home on campus sports because of the Omicron surge, so they

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may be cheering just for the teams. We also have begun testing our athletes a second time during the week with the Nurse administering At Home Covid tests to the teams. This is in an effort to get more recent data on our players Covid status and provide additional safety for all of those involved in sports at MWA.

We are also looking forward to the completion of the US Gym which will allow for more training, conditioning and practice times for our teams and athletes since we will not have to share one Gym with the middle school. The upper school gym will also allow us to have more middle school teams since our interest in playing sports has grown as our wave sizes have increased to 168 students per grade level. With 2 gyms and 2 fields on campus so that each division has their own field and gym, the middle school can then have multiple teams in a sport. The interest already exists in soccer and volleyball and hopefully that will also be the case in basketball. Since the middle school did not have sports last year because of the pandemic, there seems to be a lot of pent up excitement and demand to participate in sports which will carry dividends to our entire sports program as students coming into the upper school will not be brand new to some of our sports offerings.

The hope is that the Covid surge will abate and our Spring Sports will have complete and uninterrupted seasons. The benefits for our students in participating in Sports and other co-curricular activities have never been so much in need for the development of our students' social-emotional well being as well as their physical health.

Go Marlins! Beat the Covid!

Links to Additional Material:

- [Thrive@Home hub](#)
- [Our Futures Project](#)
- [SSC Parent Elections](#)