



MWA CEO Report to the Making Waves Academy Board

June 2022

2021-22 School Year Close

There is much to celebrate and much to continue to improve upon. The finish line is near. If this were a competition, maybe it would be a triathlon? This year has involved stamina, adaptability, resilience, strategy, an ability to be proficient in multiple disciplines, and an ability to battle against external natural elements, while also battling within yourself to push yourself to meet or beat personal milestones or just not to give up. Just to be clear, let us review some of the key obstacles this year:

- *a return to in-person learning after an 18-month lay-off*
- *Continued COVID surges throughout the year along with quarantines and daily sporadic absences*
- *Late summer, early fall, and mid-year staff resignations*
- *Personnel incidents*
- *Legislation proposed to continue to limit charter school growth, flexibility, and our existence*
- *Days of additional school closure due to staffing shortage, COVID surge, and a water main break*

And, given these challenges, we have been able to celebrate some big wins such as:

- *First Harvard University student admitted, historically high rate for college admissions for seniors, and tracking towards our typically strong high school graduation rate*
- *Continued high interest in our lottery enrollment process (a robust wait lists for all eligible grades)*
- *A COVID testing and contact tracing system that created a sense of safety for over 1,100 students and over 150 full and part-time staff*
- *Hiring over 80 people from July 2021 through April 2022 (an avg. of 9/month)*
- *Meeting our goal of 95% of enrolled students taking various state-mandated assessments*
- *Seeing more funding for COVID relief and other one-time funding increases*
- *Beginning to make material strides in lowering the budget starting with the FY 2022-23 budget*

I really appreciate those staff, faculty, leadership, and families who have continued to persevere with us. Despite the challenges, some of us who remain feel battle-tested and are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. We see the new opportunities presented to us to continue to improve and get better in serving our students and families.

Progress to Goals for 2021-22

My goals and *Objectives & Key Results (OKRs)* have had to shift more than in any other year of my school leadership. Typically, I am able to maintain momentum and make progress on at least two or more major goals. I have had to pivot and amend my areas of focus on goals and timelines multiple times this year.

| Goal | Updates | Timing |
|--|--|-------------|
| Goal #1 – <i>Develop a core instructional approach that is consistent with the core identity of MWA’s past and provides forward-looking approaches that are responsive to more current and future teaching and learning challenges and opportunities.</i> | In talking with school leadership, we are in alignment on the focus for strong academic instruction and support for 5 th and 6 th grades to build a strong foundation that support more access to learning and opportunities as they move through the school. The revamping of the senior leadership structure of the school will empower these new leadership roles to make decisions in the best interest of the student clusters they are responsible for and the accessibility and visibility to be able to more directly support faculty and staff. | JUNE |
| Goal #2 – <i>Apply some of the recommendations of the Cal Berkeley Board Fellows in the area of further capturing and systemizing program and teaching innovation through a consistent “test and learn” approach.</i> | I have deprioritized this goal for now, with the exception of the college access scope and sequence work. I think there will be “test and learn” opportunities we can take advantage this year. | NA |
| Goal #3 – <i>Assess MWA programs to assess resource allocation levels for the near and medium term to support long term financial sustainability.</i> | Working with Wallace (MWA CFO) we made significant progress in pivoting in our uses of financial resources. We did this mainly through a reduction in some service provider supports (with additional reductions planned for 2023-24) and through an elimination of some roles. We will continue to review how resources can be optimized for 1) school safety and student/staff support (holistic), 2) instruction that optimizes for early interventions (5 th -6 th grades) and a reduction over subsequent years in this area, and 3) innovation through test and learn opportunities. | JUNE |

Strategic Plan Updates

The most recent Senior Leadership Team (SLT – leaders across MWA, MWF and CAP) meeting in May highlighted an evolving shared understanding of our goals with Wave-Makers at various levels (e.g. 5th-12th, college, & career) and the opportunities for alignment. There was loose agreement that “college access and success” needs to expand to be more inclusive in our language and approaches that marry a post-secondary pathway continuum (early career, vocational certification, and other pathways with a continued emphasis on college) with some shared values in working with our students to develop key skills/traits (e.g. a sense of agency). Our discussions feel more authentic, nuanced, and deeper in our understanding of where we are with our work and how much more aligned we are than one year ago.