



Learn. Graduate. Give Back.

MWA CEO Report to the Making Waves Academy Board

October 2022

In this report I present some highlights that provide context and color to frame the start of the school year. The programming occurring is due to the ongoing and evolving responses and mitigations related to COVID. As mitigations have shifted, both on campus and across the region, it has made it easier to do some of the things we were able to do before the pandemic. These mitigations could become restrictive again sometime during the school year, and within the same school year, revert back to more lax restrictions. Overall, through the first eight weeks or so, we continue to see a stronger start to the year.

Snapshots and Highlights

- Upper school students attending a CalShakes performance of *Taming of the Shrew*.
- Upper school students going to Stanford University to visit the campus.
- Members of the College and Career Counseling team **travelling to Houston** for the NACAC (National Association for College Admission Counseling) Conference.
- An upper school all-school meeting with students.
- In-person, Friday PD (Professional Development) meetings.
- Athletics (middle and upper school) competitions taking place against other schools.
- College admissions representatives visiting MWA to speak with seniors.
- Upper school club fair in the upper school quad (e.g. booths/tables sponsored by student clubs).
- Allowing the option to forgo masks when outside (still required for indoors)
- Interim Assessment Blocks (IAB) Assessments being administered to help us gauge where students are with standards-based learning for the year so far.
- Upper school juniors & seniors being signed up to take the SAT and PSAT on campus this month.
- Set up new online platform (Bloomz) to support communication with parents/families.
- Held our first in-person back-to-school day in three years with our parents/guardians.

This list is not meant to be an exhaustive list but rather examples of the kinds of programming that are signs of school vitality that it had been lost under more restrictive pandemic safeguards and protocols.

Remaining Works in Progress and Challenges

- **Supervision (Campus Safety)** – Supervision is stronger than last year overall, but there are still some times of the day it could be stronger. Building the habit of showing up for all scheduled supervision shifts and/or finding a replacement is still a challenge for some supervision teams.

- **Arrival/Dismissal** – While smoother overall, there are still a material number of parents foregoing the drive loop to pick up and drop off their children. This continues to be an area of concern for safety reasons. Building new habits for both supervision and arrival/dismissal continue.
- **Vaping/Smoking on Campus in Bathrooms** – We continue to have students using vape pens to smoke in bathrooms during the school day. While, overall, it is a small number of students doing this, it is something we have little tolerance for. Students caught doing this are being suspended and also offered counseling and support (if needed) as part of their post-suspension re-entry.
- **Use of Racialized and Discriminatory Language** – A small handful of students have received suspensions and considered for expulsion for using racially discriminatory language on campus – including verbal comments and threats as well as written comments and threats. I continue to work with the Deans and Assistant Principals to calibrate on appropriate consequences for these heinous and hurtful acts. We are an inclusive community and will not tolerate actions and words that are not inclusive and that are discriminatory.
- **Facility Management and Maintenance** – Our COO, Ms. Martinez, and I have had some great meetings with MWF executive leadership and staff to better understand and get on the same page about facilities management. Whether it's occasional water intrusion issues, general repairs, or ongoing preventative maintenance, we have seen a real shift in the approach. We think it is important that students and staff see and experience a “world class” school campus that makes them feel valued, with high expectations for success.
- **New Values Recognition** – We are instituting regular nominations for staff across the school to receive recognition and appreciation from their peers, based on actions that align with one of the five school values of **Community, Resilience, Respect, Responsibility, and Scholarship**. The first one was focused on Community. We will look to do something similar to recognize students.

I shared a report with the Board before this meeting based on a staff survey that closed on 9/30/22. The survey suggests a sense from staff that we are moving in the right direction, and that staff, overall, feels like they know who to go to if there is an issue. I am happy to discuss questions in the Board meeting.

Approach to Intervention, Flex Time, & Social-Emotional/Psychological Support

Our approach to academic intervention, “flex time”, and social-emotional/psychological support is shifting. Starting with the latter, our model is trying to make the shift to “right-size” supports for the various levels of student social-emotional and psychological support (Tiers 1-3, with Tier 3 needing the most specialized and differentiated support). As we are making this shift, we are trying to assess ways our system can vary the “dosage” amounts that will better align with our resources and staffing moving forward while also doing our best to meet the needs of our students. “Flex Period” is a new class period that is meant to replace the “Differentiated Tiered Instruction” (DTI) and “Marlin Hour” class periods. I think we are one to two years away from being able to fully make the transition. By the end of the 1st semester we hope to have a clearer understanding of how we can marry the needs of students with the best ways to deliver those supports within the school day. For academic intervention, the switch from the opt-in ASES program and the new ELO (Extended Learning Opportunity) program is also occurring. Both programs came/come with funding from the state. We are retooling our approach to extended day, intersession, and summer programming for 5th and 6th graders this year. The state, recognizing that the schools and traditional school districts are not able to pivot rapidly, are allowing some flexibility in the program as schools and districts try to make these shifts.

Objectives for 2022-23

Areas of Focus	Objectives	Updates
<i>Campus safety and culture</i>	Align and deploy resources to address campus safety, improve the sense of well-being on campus, and see improvements in school culture.	I am continuing to focus on this area. This is leading to an increase of suspensions for serious breaches of school policy. It feels better overall but still lots to do.
<i>Routines, Expectations, and Procedures (REPs) & Standardized Operating Procedures (SOPs)</i>	Develop clear routines, expectations, and procedures that are both school-wide and differentiated by grade level and by functional area.	I think staff have appreciated having a clearer set of guidelines and expectations for student REPs. Many are benefitting. Some are needing/wanting additional support/training to be able to do it more effectively. I think there is a commitment and expectation for these practices to occur more consistently with fidelity, and there is still a sense that it is improving.
<i>Instruction</i>	Professional development plans, trainings, and meetings that are aligned with best practices, guaranteed and viable, and that can be implemented with fidelity in both school-wide and differentiated practices.	So far, the Assistant Principals are following the plan. A student activity plan had to be rescheduled in order to accommodate the PD plan. In addition, both APs are moving towards and doing more “coaching” with teachers/staff.
<i>Innovation</i>	Create opportunities and invite staff to pilot and “test and learn” different and new approaches to our instructional and non-instructional practices.	Will not be able to focus on innovation as much this year as we focus on the basics. However, we are piloting two SEL-related programs as well as creatively using the Flex Period in the upper school for piloting elective courses and offering credit recovery courses.

Strategic Plan Updates

We are still in the discussion phase but have not committed to anything on paper in terms of aligning college access and success programming. That being said, I think we will see positive movement in this area given the leadership in place and agreement on elements of the overall vision for the work moving forward. With the recent branding analysis work Making Waves Foundation recently completed, we will discuss implications for how we advertise and share the opportunities that align MWA and MWF work.