

Maggie L. Walker School Advisory Council
2018-2019 End of Year Report
Cynthia Kostelecky – Chair

Good morning and greetings from the Maggie Walker Governor’s School for Government & International Studies (MLWGS) School Advisory Council, the SAC.

My name is Cynthia Kostelecky, and I am the 2018-2019 Chair of the SAC. I am the parent of a son who is a rising senior in the Class of 2020 and a daughter who is a rising freshman in the Class of 2023.

I have had the honor of serving on the SAC for the last three years. My term ends this month at which time I will begin serving a three-year term on the MLWGS Foundation Board. I am looking forward to contributing to Maggie Walker in that roll.

Today, I will provide you with a brief summary of the SAC, and its work during the 2018-2019 school year. Nineteen people served on the SAC this year including:

- 6 - parents (representing various districts)
- 4 – students
- 4 – faculty & staff
- 3 – Director’s appointees (including alumni)
- 1 – Gifted Coordinator
- 1 – Administrative representative

The full SAC meets at 7:30am once a month during the school year. Additionally, each SAC member serves on several SAC subcommittees. Each subcommittee works on at least one project with a goal of completing its work by the close of the school year. Below is a summary of the 2018-2019 subcommittee projects.

Calendar Committee

Max Smith is the permanent chair of the Calendar Committee. His committee developed and this body approved the 2019-2020 calendar. Next year, the Calendar Committee will develop the 2020-2021 calendar with an eye toward an early start date.

Max is an invaluable member of the SAC as he provides a critical link between the work of the SAC and administration.

Student Identity Committee

At the request of Dr. Lowerre and to aid in his long-range planning, the SAC formed a School Identity Committee this year. That Committee was tasked with creating, administering and analyzing the results of three Maggie Walker community surveys. The School Identity Committee was chaired by Maggie Walker teacher, David Barnes, and we are grateful for his work and commitment to this project.

The three surveys conducted included Student, Parent and Alumni Surveys. The Alumni Survey was completed in cooperation with the Maggie Walker Foundation. The most notable takeaways from these surveys were that overall people are happy with their Maggie Walker experience and believe the School is a community of highly motivated students in an environment that encourages a love of learning. Importantly, the survey results suggest that there is a need to build a support structure to aid students in adjusting to Maggie Walker. All survey results have been transferred to Dr. Lowerre for his use and further analysis.

Policy & Curriculum Committee:

This committee worked with Dr. Ellis in developing a survey to assess student interest in electives, including electives presently in the Course Offerings Book and ideas for additional electives.

The Policy Committee also studied and surveyed students and teachers regarding the Maggie Walker Handbook and Code of Conduct regarding the exam exemption policy. After analyzing the data, the Policy & Curriculum Committee suggested the following amendment.

Remove exam exemption criteria #3: “If student exceeds 10 total tardies (TE & TU), the student is not exempt” from exams.

This matter has been submitted to the faculty to decide whether to approve this policy change.

Global Outreach Committee:

The Global Outreach Committee worked in conjunction with the Maggie Walker Foundation in setting the groundwork for the Maggie Walker Speaker Series. This includes developing a process through which faculty, students, and staff work toward bringing various speakers and events to Maggie Walker. This year was a planning phase, and it is expected that the outreach events will be held as early as the fall of 2019.

Student & Family Engagement Committee:

In conjunction with the PTSA, the Student & Family Engagement Committee is organizing a network of Maggie Walker sophomore parents who will coordinate a system for facilitating a smooth transition and adjustment for freshman families. Still in the planning stages, this is

expected to include group settings in which freshman children and parents have the opportunity to meet fellow freshman families and also opportunities for freshman to obtain sage advice from current Maggie Walker families.

Library Update & Library Vision Walk:

Librarian and SAC member, Wendy DeGroat conducted a Library Vision Walk this year. The Vision Walk asked students, “if they could have a magic wand, how they would improve the library?” Nearly 200 students responded seeking everything from resource materials to comfy chairs and permission to eat in the library. Wendy is in the process of implementing library changes based on the Vision Walk results.

Nominations & By-Laws Committee:

Extensive revisions were made to the SAC By-Laws during the 2017-2018 school year. As Chair of that Committee last year, I headed up the effort to clarify and amend the rules as they related to replacing SAC members whose terms were ending. At the time, we noted other areas of the By-Laws in need of amendments, but decided to implement the amended By-Laws prior to making further revisions. During this 2018-2019 school year, the Nominations and By-Laws Committee identified additional areas of the By-Laws that had gaps and expect those areas to be addressed in the 2019-2020 school year.

The Nominations Committee also accepted applications, conducted interviews and held elections to replace the outgoing SAC members. Next year, the SAC will be chaired by Barrie Bowers parent of a rising senior. Barrie is a strong leader, and the SAC is fortunate to have her at the helm during the 2019-2020 school year.

Thank you for your time and continued support of Maggie Walker. It is a special school where children who have longed struggled to fit in at school, at last do.