

## **Maggie L. Walker School Advisory Council 2022-2023 End of Year Report**

Rachel Gable – Chair

It is my pleasure to share the following report on the activities of the Maggie Walker Governor's School for Government & International Studies (MLWGS) School Advisory Council (SAC) for the 2022-2023 academic year. This year, SAC was comprised of nineteen members who provided a range of perspectives on matters related to the enhancement of the school, its culture, and its role in the broader region. SAC representatives included:

- 6- Parents (representing various school districts)
- 4- Students (2 juniors, 2 seniors)
- 4- Faculty and Staff
- 3- Director's Appointees (one faculty, one parent, one alumnus)
- 1- Gifted Coordinator
- 1- Administrative Representative

SAC members met as a full group six times this academic year. Committees were formed and tasks were identified at the outset of the year, and committee members met in small groups regularly throughout the year to identify and accomplish near-term goals and to monitor progress toward long-term goals established by the MLWGS Strategic Plan. This year's committees included the following:

- Nominations and Bylaws
- Policy and Curriculum
- Culture and Student Engagement
- Strategic Marketing Plan
- Prospective Students Early Engagement
- Measurement and Methodology Team

In addition to work accomplished in committees, the SAC is available to the Regional School Board and the school administration for ad-hoc advisory services. At its September meeting, four SAC members agreed to serve on an ad hoc Measurement and Methodology Team if advisory requests arose during the calendar year. While the SAC did not receive any such requests during 2022-2023, I would advise that SAC members continue to form a Measurement and Methodology Team again in 2023-2024.

A summary of the work accomplished by each committee is outlined below.

### Nominations and Bylaws

There were no requests for review or changes to the bylaws this year. Given that the bylaws were updated most recently in 2018, the committee recommends that they be reviewed for potential revisions in the upcoming academic year.

This year concluded the service term for two parents (Rachel Gable, Leigh Anne Ratliff), one faculty (Dr. Rachel Loving), and two students (Sean Fang, Audrey Paulson). Faculty representative Ed Coleman spearheaded the nominations, interview, and selection process to replace departing

SAC members. Mr. Coleman and committee members interviewed candidates in the month of April, and the full SAC committee voted on new members during its May meeting. Parents Asima Chakravorty and Allison Dunnaway, and students Sophia Watson and Sonia Chornodolsky were invited to join SAC for 2023-2024. The selection process to replace outgoing faculty has been scheduled for August 2023. Director's Appointees Lynn Pleveich, Matteo Carter, and Laura McCoy all agreed to serve again in the 2023-2024 year on one-year renewable terms.

### Policy and Curriculum

The SAC Committee on Policy and Curriculum has worked the last two academic years (2021-2022, 2022-2023) to examine and produce recommendations related to course labeling and weighting at MLWGS. Through its subcommittee on grading and weighting, the committee gathered feedback from students and colleges through two surveys (see attached results summaries for the [student survey](#) and [college survey](#)) and partnered with a faculty committee to develop a recommendation to create a new course label, called "Intensive," to replace the current label, "University," to better describe courses requiring exceptional commitment and intense work at or above the Advanced Placement or Dual Enrollment level. This new label acknowledges and rewards the additional rigor expected of students and comes with an additional one-point grade weight. All "Intensive" level courses will include a discipline-appropriate culminating assessment (e.g. research paper, presentation, portfolio, exam, or other capstone project) from which no student may be exempt. Teachers interested in having their challenging honors courses re-labeled as "Intensive" with a 1.0 weight worked with their Department Chairs to formally request approval for the label change in January 2023. Courses approved by the administration were announced prior to the start of spring registration. The new label was announced to the Regional School Board at the January 2023 meeting and introduced to students during course scheduling assemblies during the week of January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023. The 2023-2024 Course Catalog will be the first year to introduce the new "Intensive" level offerings. The SAC Committee on Policy and Curriculum plans to continue liaising with faculty and administrators to assess the extent to which the new course label achieves its aim.

A general summary of the process and final recommendations concerning course labeling and weighting is [attached here](#).

### School Culture and Student Engagement

This committee continued its mission of creating a more accepting and inclusive environment at MLWGS by facilitating new events and activities for students and teachers. Student feedback was solicited regarding decreasing barriers to student participation via a student survey conducted at the annual Fall Festival event. Inclusive activities included designing cultural heritage displays for Native American Heritage Month, African American History Month, and Women's History Month as well as facilitating student engagement opportunities for African American History Month and Women's History Month. To round the year off, the subcommittee expanded its efforts by assisting in Dare to Be a Dragon Day. During this event, 200 fifth graders from our partnering districts visited MLWGS to engage in a variety of activities that illuminated our school's vibrant culture.

### Strategic Marketing Plan

The Strategic Marketing Plan Committee met several times throughout the year to strategize ways to excite and engage prospective students about Maggie Walker's unique culture and curriculum. While several methods were discussed, the committee ultimately decided on the creation of a flier to be distributed to middle schoolers. The flier was drafted and given to members of Maggie

Walker's administration for feedback and is currently in its final stages before it is ready for distribution. Additionally, the committee discussed ways in which Maggie Walker administration could assess middle schoolers' engagement and knowledge about Maggie Walker and considered whether this would be best done through a middle school counselor survey or a middle school parent survey. Moving forward, the committee hopes to begin the distribution of the flier and continue to create resources to increase middle school engagement and participation.

### Prospective Students Early Engagement

During the 2022-23 school year, this committee developed a wide array of ideas to shine a light on all that Maggie Walker has to offer to better inform and attract younger students. The group laid the groundwork for the execution of larger-scale projects next year, namely an activities fair featuring high-interest MLWGS clubs geared toward older elementary school students and younger middle school students. Committee members met with and sought input from student club leaders and concluded that an Activities Fair facilitated in conjunction with SAC members is a feasible strategy for prospective students' early engagement. While this idea for a Fair was not executed this year, the committee proposes to develop a strategy and timeline for such an event in the upcoming calendar year. Committee members also began working with the Strategic Marketing Plan subcommittee to develop an informative, tangible resource covering the highlights of Maggie Walker's history and community that clubs visiting local elementary schools can distribute. Overall, this group successfully identified and outlined solutions to the various obstacles detracting from a wider applicant pool, providing a strong launching pad for the committee's work in the next year.

### Measurement and Methodology Team

This ad hoc committee was formed to respond to ad hoc requests from the school administration or from the Regional School Board, as well as to serve as methodology experts as SAC continues to refine its research aim in support of school enhancements.

### Year-End Business: Selection of 2023-2024 Officers

The SAC is fortunate to have exceptionally qualified and engaged members committed to serve in the upcoming year. Officers for the upcoming year are selected among continuing members at the final business meeting of the current year. During its May meeting, the SAC received nominations and voted to elect officers for 2023-2024. The following SAC members were elected to officer roles: parent Julie Solomon - Chair, parent Bethany Brady Spalding - Vice Chair, teacher Dr. Christine Anderson - Secretary, and teacher Sam Ulmschneider - Historian. These four current SAC members share a wealth of knowledge that will serve the larger school community and the SAC well in the new academic year.

We thank the 2022-2023 officers for their service and acknowledge the important work they accomplished, all while laying the groundwork to achieve long-term goals in the years to come. Outgoing officers Rachel Gable – Chair, Dr. Rachel Loving – Vice Chair, and Leigh Anne Ratliff – Secretary concluded their terms as SAC members this spring. Outgoing officer Dr. Lisa Williams – Historian will continue on SAC in 2023-2024; her guidance will provide valuable continuity and perspective for the newly elected officers as they establish objectives for the year.

### Looking Ahead

The SAC maintains a high level of commitment to the MLWGS community with its thoughtful

guidance developed through iterative and collaborative engagement with the school's many stakeholder groups. We thank all the outgoing members and officers for their impressive efforts this year, and we look forward to a great year ahead with incoming members and a new officers. We would like to take a moment to congratulate our graduating seniors, Sean Fang and Audrey Paulson, as they say farewell to Maggie Walker and set their sights on exciting possibilities in college. Both Sean and Audrey led committees and provided tremendous insight, guidance, and leadership during their two years on SAC. As with so many of our high school members, their work was both impressive and inspiring. When we think about SAC's role in the larger school community, we are pleased that students and parents continue to show a strong interest in the work of SAC, and we take our advisory responsibility seriously in the spirit of enhancing the school. We view this organization as special in large part because of the diversity of opinion and the thoughtful recommendations provided by students, faculty, administrators, parents, and key stakeholders within the community. I would like to conclude this report by echoing the remarks of Michael Larkin, the 2021-2022 SAC Chair, in last year's end of year report, "We've developed a culture of collaboration, inclusion, and respect over the last several years, and I look forward to seeing an even greater impact of the School Advisory Council in the future."

I would like to close by encouraging the Regional School Board to continue leveraging the School Advisory Council for input and recommendations. On behalf of the entire SAC membership, thank you for the opportunity to serve MLWGS and its constituents.

