

Maggie L. Walker School Advisory Council 2023-2024 End of Year Report

This year, Maggie Walker Governor's School for Government & International Studies (MLWGS) School Advisory Council (SAC) was comprised of nineteen members who provided a range of perspectives on and relationships to MLWGS, its culture, and its role in the broader region. SAC representatives included six parents representing various school districts; four students including two juniors and two seniors; five members of MLWGS faculty and staff; a Gifted Coordinator; and three Director's Appointees including one additional faculty member, one additional parent, and one alumnus.

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

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

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

Nominations & 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 strongly recommends that they be reviewed for potential revisions in the upcoming academic year.

This year concluded the service term for several SAC members including two parents (Jill Blondin, Julie Solomon), one faculty (Joy Cobb), one administrator (Dr. Lisa Williams), and two students (Isabella Kenney, Imran Rasiwalla). Director's appointee and faculty representative Ed Coleman will again spearhead the nominations, interview, and selection process to replace departing

SAC members. The selection process to replace outgoing members is still underway and has been scheduled to conclude in August 2024. The full SAC committee will vote on new members during its September meeting. Director's Appointees Ed Coleman, Lynn Pleveich, Matteo Carter, and Laura McCoy are under consideration to serve again in 2024-2025 year for an additional one-year renewable term.

Policy & Curriculum

The SAC Committee on Policy and Curriculum to evaluate and make recommendations related to the Carnegie Unit shift to prevent students from graduating with too few Maggie Walker social studies credit hours, as well as follow up on how colleges and universities perceptions of our new course labeling system and what impact (if any) it is already having on student college application processes.

School Culture & Student Engagement

This committee continued its mission of supporting a more inclusive environment at MLWGS by assisting with events and activities for students and teachers. A highlight of their activities this year centered on Women's History Month school wide activities and events including a visit from Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger on Monday, March 25th. Rep. Spanberger shared her uniquely informed perspective on the past, present, and future of women in Washington, the evolution of Congressional demographics, and the ever-changing face of Congress. Many SAC members helped to plan and support this visit with special thanks to Bethany Brady Spalding who handled outreach to Rep. Spanberger. Additionally, SAC student representatives ran a book exchange across Women's History Month.

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. This was a joint project with the Prospective Students Early Engagement committee as this tangible resource met the goals of each committee. Work continued from the 22-23 year, as the committee reviewed a draft flier, which was then given to members of Maggie Walker's administration for feedback. The flier has been approved and it is ready for distribution. Moving forward, the committee will make recommendations on the distribution of the flier and continue to create resources to increase middle school engagement and participation.

Additionally, student member Sonia Chornodolsky provided SAC with the opportunity for an early look at the PTA's School of Excellence Survey results. PTSA Chair Veronica Chornodolsky presented to SAC and shared insights and recommendations, as well providing an update on PTSA membership and activities. Our thanks to Veronica Chornodolsky for sharing this important resource with SAC.

Prospective Students Early Engagement

During the 2023-24 school year, this committee continued working on the agenda it had set for itself in 2022-2023. As mentioned above, committee members continued working with the Strategic Marketing Plan committee to develop an informative, tangible resource covering the highlights of Maggie Walker's history and community that student club representatives visiting local elementary schools can distribute. Student committee members reached out to high-interest clubs to gauge interest in being representatives to local elementary schools and middle schools for visits and to share their MLWGS experience. SAC's Gifted Specialist shared a list of target elementary schools in Richmond.

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. No projects were recommended to this committee in 2023-2024.

Selection of 2023-2024 Officers

While SAC is fortunate to have exceptionally qualified members committed to serve in 2023-2024, to date, no one has stepped forward with an interest in leading SAC. As a reminder of the process, officers for the upcoming year are typically selected among continuing members at the last meeting of the current year. It was necessary to first reschedule and then postpone this year's final meeting due to changes in the year end academic calendar and the inability of the Chair to attend due to personal reasons. Leadership nominations via outreach and recruitment will continue during June and July with the desire that the officers' roles can be filled and approved in July 2024. Vice Chair Bethany Brady Spalding has agreed to serve again in her role for 2023-2024, and current outgoing Chair Julie Solomon has agreed to assist with recruitment for the remaining roles.

We thank the 2023-2024 officers for their service and acknowledge the important work they accomplished. Outgoing officer Julie Solomon concluded her term as a SAC member this spring. Outgoing officers faculty members Dr. Christine Anderson - Secretary and Sam Ulmschneider - Historian will continue on SAC in 2024-2025. Their prior experience will provide important continuity for SAC as a whole and guidance for newly elected officers as they establish objectives for the year.

Looking Ahead: 2023-2024

With representation across MLWGS key stakeholder groups, SAC remains committed to the MLWGS community and values its opportunity to engage across all represented groups. We thank all the outgoing members and officers for their service. We congratulate our wonderful graduating seniors, Isabella Kenney and Imran Rassiwalla, as they move on to their next great adventures at university. As committee leaders, Isabella and Imran brought true impact to SAC during their tenure. Our student members are a key part of what makes this organization special as they bring a fresh vision to our meeting tables. All SAC members appreciate our membership structure and how it brings diverse viewpoints, experiential perspectives, and thoughtful recommendations provided by students, faculty, administrators, parents, and other key stakeholders within the community. Echoing last year's outgoing Chair Rachel Gable, I encourage 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.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julie Solomon, Chair