

TO: Mr. Dan Ellingson, Board Chairperson
The Math and Science Academy (MSA) Board of Directors
Mr. Randy Vetsch, Executive Director, MSA

DA: February 28, 2023

FR: Ms. Shelbi Pool, Board Chairperson
The Woodbury Leadership Academy (WLA) Board of Directors
Dr. Mortensen, Executive Director, WLA

RE: **CLARIFICATION OF DESIRE TO MERGE**

Dear Mr. Ellingson and the MSA Board of Directors,

We are writing on behalf of the WLA Board of Directors concerning the potential merger of our schools. We as a board and as school administration, are trying to approach the merger with an open mind, but there have been a few comments made that we have struggled to move past with our stakeholders. We are requesting that you, as the MSA Board of Directors, address these comments so that we can feel comfortable moving forward with this process.

At your December 5th, 2022 board meeting, Board Chair Mr. Ellingson stated, "We need to be clear to the community in saying we're exploring a merger because we want their building and I don't mean to be mean about it but that's what we want. We don't want their curriculum, we don't want to wear uniforms, we don't want to go down into logos and all this stuff... we want, we *need* a bigger building and we don't know how to afford it unless we can go back in time to a three percent interest rate which they happen to have and a beautiful facility, right?"

Similarly at the December 5th, 2022 board meeting, board member Mr. Eng stated that there was no strategic fit with WLA. Similarly, board member Ms. Bartle said "If we are going to pick (ISD #) 622, which I don't like.." When questioned by board member Mr. Sletten as to why she didn't like (ISD#) 622 she laughed and said, "Because I live in (ISD#) 833". **What was meant by these comments?**

At WLA we understand that within some of your board meetings, you have facilities committee updates where you have stated that WLA is the best option for expansion due to facilities options. While we understand the context, the perception of many of our staff members, family stakeholders, and board members, is that facilities options are the primary reason for MSA's interest in merging with WLA. What we have not heard is excitement on your end about the merger providing a quality PK-12 education for our combined student body. If the building were taken out of the equation, because for us it is non-negotiable, would you still be interested in a merger? **Are you able to recognize and articulate any other benefits of a partnership with WLA aside from our building?**

In summary, as WLA looks forward to our future, with or without a merger, we intend to become a PK-12 quality school that provides a seamless education and continuum of services for *ALL* students. We look forward to being able to offer beautiful facilities, extensive programming,

financial stability to stand the test of time, and operational efficiencies. The question at this point is whether or not MSA has that same vision and wants to partner with WLA for the right reasons?

Dr. Kathleen Mortensen
WLA Executive Director

Ms. Shelbi Pool
WLA Board Chair