

TO: Woodbury Leadership Academy Merger Committee Members  
DA: March 10, 2023  
FR: Dr. Mortensen  
RE: Merger Committee Meetings for the Week of March 13, 2023

## AGENDA

### 1. WLA MISSION & VISION

- a. The mission of WLA is to utilize leadership based programs and strategies grounded in solid research, combined with the demonstrated success of Core Knowledge curriculum, as a basis of a rigorous overall educational program that builds strong skills in math, reading, literature, writing, music, science, and technology.
- b. The vision of WLA is to be a school where students and graduates become exceptional leaders, and are prepared to take on the academic and leadership challenges they will face as they transition into high school.

2. Review responses to the questions WLA Merger Committees posed to MSA  
Ben Broderick duplicated a copy of the Q&A sheet and added these questions/comments to the document during the meeting to track the feedback with the specific question and answer.

#### Comments:

- Overall, responses are disappointing. They have never expressed the desire for a K-12 program, so this is surprising. More thought behind the answers would be appreciated.
- Ben suggested would we get better answers if we were able to meet with the Director or other members of the committee in person?
- Having detailed information and data from the surveys in order to know the questions asked and detailed survey responses would be extremely valuable to WLA.
- What does the multi-tiered system of support mean? How are they enhancing.
- Access to the brief will be important to the parent stakeholders. This is available on the Merger webpage.
- Request a copy of the 3-, 5-, 10-year plan: The MSA Strategic Plan is available on their website.
- Along with the financial merges, how will the WLA bonds be affected related to our enrollment and building security?
- WLA BOD has maintained that the current building will remain K-8 and have posed this to MSA. This will be telling.
- What is MSA planning for their building if this merger doesn't go through? What is their secondary plan if the merger doesn't happen?

- It may be good to share WLA’s plan for adding high school if the merger doesn’t go through.
  - What does it mean to retain identity for both schools? Ideally, for a merge, we’re going to become one big, happy family. We won’t be able to still be considered MSA and WLA individually.
  - The student retention answer: class sizes found from an Annual report dated from 2022 showed the 6th grade class from 2017 drops from 88 to 64 in 2022 as 10th graders.
3. Consider any “non-negotiables” from your personal points of view in regard to merging
- a. Merged organization and authorizer preference
    - i. MSA high school program is accredited and would be a benefit to WLA students
    - ii. What does it take to get accredited? How long?
    - iii. What is the legacy bonding benefit?
  - b. Facilities (The WLA Board of Directors and Dr. Mortensen already indicated that their strong preference is that grades K-8 would need to remain at 8089 Globe Drive.)
    - i. Stakeholders have donated so much time, energy, and money to make WLA what it is today. Parents will want to keep our kids at the space we worked so hard for.
    - ii. The differences in the campuses are stark. The younger kids need the green space for recess and PE. The MSA campus poses more risk for the younger kids with its location and proximity to the streets, neighborhoods in Woodbury and access.
  - c. Curriculum
    - i. Keeping Core Knowledge for K-5 is non-negotiable. We have worked too hard on developing this, and we can still be a school of distinction just with K-5.
      1. We love the curriculum develops students into well-rounded individuals and build non-academic traits that prepare them well for their future.
    - ii. The Leadership K-12 program is a non-negotiable.
    - iii. The program allows for opportunity to
      1. How intense is the homework load from MSA? Knowing some parent survey answers on this potentially could be really interesting to see. We know that MSA promotes extra-curriculars, so how does this work with the "rigor" they are touting?
    - iv. Having options for the strengths of the students is important.
      1. Could we meet in the middle with the graduation requirements?
      2. If we merged, what options would be available for tracks for students who want a stronger STEM focus?
      3. Providing options to retain PSEO-eligible high school students to utilize the funding.

- d. Keeping uniforms
    - i. This promotes diversity, equity and inclusion.
    - ii. Open to relaxing the policy for high school students to allow for more self-expression.
  - e. Leadership consistency through the duration of the potential merger.
    - i. In Executive Director, Board of Directors, administration
    - ii. Ideally, an elected group of people that represent both communities
  - f. Transparency from MSA on the points of their culture issues:
    - i. achievement gap
    - ii. supporting students with IEPs and 504 plans, special education in general
    - iii. diversity and inclusion
    - iv. and a plan to address all of these issues
  - g. Hear from WLA teachers on their non-negotiables and priorities as we consider this merger.
4. Determine dates and topics of interest for next meeting. I would suggest not meeting again until the first week of April since the March WLA Board of Directors meeting may make a decision to halt the process of exploring a merger. Making such a decision will likely depend on the extent and quality of the MSA Board of Directors response to the letter that Dr. Mortensen and Ms. Shelbi Pool composed and sent to them last month.

Next meeting: April 5, 2023 at 6pm

- Review more detailed answers from MSA and anticipated response to the letter sent to MSA from WLA.
- Determine whether to join the other Merger Group in a discussion with MSA representatives.

We would appreciate information from the MSA merger committee in minutes.