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**MAGNOLIA SCIENCE ACADEMY-SANTA ANA**Phone: (714) 479 0115
FAX: (714) 242 1449

Friday, April 26, 2019

RE: Magnolia Science Academy Santa Ana's response to SBE Academic Information Memo

Dear Members of California State Board of Education,

Magnolia Science Academy Santa Ana (MSA-SA) is grateful for the opportunity to explain its story, progress and plans as a response to the Academics Memos to be presented to the State Board of Education and public.

Since 2009, our school has been proudly serving the Orange County and surrounding communities with high quality and high achieving programs focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM.) With 92% graduation and 92% UC readiness rates, our students continue performing higher than the local school district and neighboring schools in the SBAC assessments.

In its new location, school added a new elementary grade span TK-5 to its programs. The relocation and significant expansion to 675 students in grades TK-12 resulted in school attracting more students with higher needs than when the school was serving 144 students in its Costa Mesa location. For the past three years, MSA-SA and Magnolia Public Schools CMO have been implementing programs and providing assistance including Multi Tiered System and Support (MTSS) to address the challenges that came with this rapid growth and expansion.

MSA-SA Spring 2017 Dashboard has been all BLUE before its relocation. At its new site, on the other hand, our Fall 2018 Dashboard data shows four areas of concerns. Although our school is still performing higher than the district average, the ELA and MATH scores in the 2018 SBAC tests showed a decrease consistent with the demographics change. 2018 Chronic absenteeism shows an increase of 3.5% to 7.3%. MSA-SA still maintains a low suspension rate of 2.2% while it is an increase from 0.9 % from the 2016-17 school year.

MSA-SA's school improvement team consisting of school admin, teachers and CMO staff worked on protocols, inquiry process, analysis and action plan to address the areas for improvement as noted in the Fall 2018 Dashboard. A detailed improvement plan has been developed and updated to address the needs of concerns after the inquiry process and root cause analyses. This document highlights the areas addressed in the plan of action.

Greatest Progress for 2018-19

According to the fall 2018 California accountability dashboard data, we increased our College/Career indicator by 11.5 % and continue to have higher graduation rate of 92.3%. In 2017-18 we implemented a character education program called Character Counts as part of our Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Teachers utilize this content to teach students the six pillars of the program, which are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, caring, fairness, and citizenship. We have also adapted a variety of alternatives to suspension. For example, Saturday School has changed from being punitive to a more restorative practice model. Students are required to attend Saturday school and they reflect on their actions, are taught new skills, and practice their new skills. Additionally, during the second half of the day students help the community in the food drive. During the exit interview, Principal/Dean meet with students, students reflecting on how their behavior impacts our school. This is only one example of how restorative practices are being applied in our Tier II discipline model. Additionally, we have many embedded Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in our school system to ensure that our Tier I interventions are effective and create a positive, safe and enriching school environment. We attribute our high graduation rate to high parental involvement through Parent College, our School Site Council, Parent Task Force, and English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) and after school workshops. During the Parent College events, parents and students receive education pertaining to the A-G requirements, which are aligned to our graduation requirements and for 4-year colleges. All students have four-year plan and meet once a year with our college counselor. MSA-SA continues to have a high acceptance rate to four-year universities. Our seniors gain admission to

a variety of colleges across the nation (e.g UC Berkeley, UCI, Cornell, USC, CSUF etc.). The ELAC committee discusses English Learner academic programs and progress. The PTF are instrumental in fundraising and providing celebrations and events that are inclusive of the diverse cultures of the student body. This not only speaks to our ability to nurture our students academically but it gives them an opportunity to experience life outside their home community and opens their world to so many life experiences. The 2017-18 year was a year in which we developed targeted intervention groups both academically and behaviorally appropriate to address the specific needs of our students. With the growth in enrollment and expansion, we have been making some adjustments, however, we were able to replicate a lot of the programs that have successfully supported our students throughout the years.

We continued to use internal data to measure growth throughout the year with NWEA MAPs and SBAC IABs. The effectiveness of intervention programs during school and afterschool has increased this year. Our Deans of Academics work diligently to update and analyze student performance with MAP and IAB assessments. Staff utilizes our student data/ growth to drive the instruction as well as formulate intervention grouping.

Lastly, reviewing our staff, parent, and student surveys through Panorama Ed. allows for an open dialog among all stakeholders so that our action plans continue to allow us to reach our greatest potential and foster a community of lifelong learners.

Summary of Concerns

Concern#1 – LCAP Priority 4 (Pupil Achievement)

Status declined 6.5 % in ELA (grade three through grade eight). MSA–SA was assigned Orange for English Learners, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, and Hispanic and yellow for Homeless.

Action #1A

Develop a greater understanding of Wonders/StudySync ELA Common Core curriculum in order to increase student achievement.

Action #1B

Improve the Lexile levels for all students so that they can be at or above grade level.

Means to Assess Improvement

Weekly Coordination meetings, Monday PDs, Grade-level/ Department check-ins, Grade level collaboration during weekly special activities for elementary and during Prep periods for secondary.

Action #1C

Improve parent understanding of CCSS ELA.

Means to Assess Improvement

Continue home visits and workshops for parents including parent college to increase parent involvement.

Concern#2 – LCAP Priority 4 (Pupil Achievement)

Status decreased 18.9% in Mathematics (grade three through grade eight). MSA–SA was assigned Orange for English Learners, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, Hispanic and Homeless.

Action #2A

Develop a greater understanding of our Math Common Core curriculum in order to increase student achievement.

Action #2B

Math-Improve foundational skills to increase student achievement in math.

Means to Assess Improvement

Weekly Coordination meetings, Monday PDs, Grade-level/ Department check-ins, Grade level collaboration during weekly special activities for elementary and during Prep periods for secondary.

Action #2C

Provide Standards Deep Dives workshops to all math teachers.

Means to Assess Improvement

MPS Math Coach and Dean of Academics meet monthly to review IAB data and conduct classroom walk throughs and feedback sessions with teachers.

Action #2D

Improve parent understanding of CCSS Math.

Means to Assess Improvement

Continue home visits and workshops for parents including parent college to increase parent involvement.

Concern#3 - LCAP Priority 5 (Pupil Engagement)

Change level increased 1.3% in Suspension Rates (grade nine through grade twelve). MSA-SA was assigned Yellow for Hispanic, Homeless, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, and Students with Disabilities.

Action #3A

Implement three-tiered system of intervention and support

Means to Assess Improvement

Continue implementing MTSS-SEL

Action #3B

Continue home visits

Means to Assess Improvement

All teachers and staff will work on scheduling home-visits with par

Action #3C

Continue with independent study programs

Means to Assess Improvement

Weekly and monthly monitoring of program data and reports.

Action #3D

School wide incentives to grades which meet the daily attendance goals.

Means to Assess Improvement

Weekly and monthly monitoring of program data and reports.

Concern#4 - LCAP Priority 6 (School Climate)

Change level increased 3.5% in Chronic Absenteeism (grade three through grade twelve).

Action #4A

Increase Positive Behavior and Student support Services (PBIS)

Means to Assess Improvement

- Weekly and monthly monitoring of program data and reports.
- Hire a full-time School Psychologist for the 2018-2019 school year to educate, address, and support with socio-emotional and mental health needs of the school community
- Conduct intervention checking in meetings
- Hold mediation sessions; student-to-student, staff-student
- Holds Restorative Circles among students
- Engage students with community service programs
- Implement effective reflection programs
- Using provided curriculum, students will complete interdisciplinary assignments that are CCSS and NGSS standards based to teach mediation, conflict-resolution techniques and general SEL learning by being the focus of next year.

Action #4B

Improve parent engagement and effectiveness

Means to Assess Improvement

- Continue home visits and workshops for parents including parent college to increase parent involvement
- Provide small group and individual supports three times a week with our first and second graders
- Utilize ParentSquare to make communication easier
- Train parents on Illuminate SIS use for continual access to student data