

Maxine Mimms Academies

Strategic Plan for 2007-2010

**Embrace the Indigenous
Genius of
Every Child**

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November 11, 2007
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Three years after its inception in 2004, MMA launches a Strategic Plan to transform public education in this country. By working with students temporarily displaced from public education, their families, community leaders, teachers and school districts, MMA develops a best practices model for public education. The plan includes action research on innovative educational approaches, establishing powerful public and private partnerships, convening collaboratoriums for community stakeholders, providing education, prevention of displacement and intervention for students and families, and building MMA's capacity to perform and help others replicate the model.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Funds for developing this plan were provided by a Strategic Planning & Capacity Building Grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
Awarded 2006-2007 to MMA

For their generous support, we thank the Gates Foundation, Rev. Robert Penton, our former Executive Director, Dr. Darya Funches of REAP Unlimited, our partners – Evergreen State College Tacoma-Dr. Artee Young, First Place School of Seattle-Dr. Doreen Cato, Tacoma Urban League-Dr. Dorothy Anderson, Parents for Students' Success-Ms. Dawn Mason – and members of our Board.

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FOUNDER'S PAGE — OUR HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

A few years ago, a great grandmother who had only finished the sixth grade came to me, having become responsible for a middle school great grandson who had been expelled from public school. She brought him to me, hoping I would work with him and help him get back into school. Having agreed to help, I went to the school district and found that over 80 percent of those being expelled from middle schools were African American males. Ten percent of African American females were being suspended. As an educator who took great pride in the success of my students in the past, these numbers were staggering to me.

We find the same staggering numbers of African American males in our prisons. In the past all I ever saw was my successful students. When I went to visit a prison, I was stunned by the large number of prisoners who cannot read. An old African proverb says "Don't look at where you failed. Look at where you tripped." This proverb made me think beyond the students I had who were successful. I began to think about where I, other teachers and the system have tripped. We have tripped over these students and missed their potential valuable contributions to society.

As the Founder of the Evergreen State College-Tacoma Campus, I had not been involved with middle school and high school students for many years. The need was and is overwhelming. As a believer in public education and in the inherent genius in all children, I knew then that something had to be done. I knew we needed to address the behavior and the academics in a systematic way, and these children could be returned to school to make a positive contribution.

Through the mission, vision and initiatives of Maxine Mimms Academies, I am coming to reclaim them. One of the last things I do in this lifetime may be to come back and reclaim those whom we and the system have failed. This may be the last thing I do for public education. Help the students who are failing and have been thrown away. Keep them from growing into the prison population. Each of these children is a genius in some way. Our job is to find that way. This is my passion. This is my legacy to education.

Maxine Buie Mimms, Ph.D.

Visionary, Founder and Executive Director

A Pledge to Rescue Our Youth

By Maya Angelou

© 2006

Young women, young men of color, we add our voices to the voices of your ancestors who speak to you over ancient seas and across impossible mountain tops.

Come up from the gloom of national neglect, you have already been paid for.

Come out of the shadow of irrational prejudice, you owe
no racial debt to history.

The blood of our bodies and the prayers of our souls have bought you a future free from shame and bright beyond the telling of it.

We pledge ourselves and our resources to seek for you clean and well-furnished schools, safe and non-threatening streets, employment which makes use of your talents, but does not degrade your dignity.

You are the best we have.

You are all we have.

You are what we have become.

We pledge you our whole hearts from this day forward.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After incorporating in 2004 with the vision of providing triage services to the forgotten population of suspended and expelled students, Maxine Mimms Academies' [MMA] produces its first three year Strategic Plan. The situation for suspended/expelled students is and was a state of emergency in Tacoma, which has recently been termed a "dropout factory," and in the nation as a whole. At the roots of the problem are institutional racism, conflicting policies such as "no child left behind," "zero-tolerance for disruptive behavior," the organizational culture and practices of public school systems and educators; lack of education and health in families and communities about how to help our children succeed in public education; the loss of and lack of appreciation of the indigenous genius of each child and our cultural roots and connections.

Using its triage approach MMA currently has four service components: Education, Family Services, Treatment and Mentoring, serving youth who are referred by Tacoma Public Schools and community contacts in the Pacific Northwest. Based on the philosophy of its Founder, Dr. Maxine Mimms, MMA maintains that every child has inherent gifts and talents –an indigenous genius—and that the role of education is to facilitate self discovery and provide a foundation of essential skills so that students can learn about learning, know about knowing, know who they are, and become positive contributors to their families, schools, communities and society.

MMA now revises its vision to be "Embrace the Indigenous Genius in Every Child," and launches Strategic Initiatives to realize that vision: [1] Capacity Building Initiative; [2] Advanced Learning Initiative; [3] Transform the Public School System Initiative; [4] Best Practices Initiative; [5] "Embrace the Indigenous Genius in Every Child" Curriculum Initiative; [6] Informed and Healthy Families Initiative; and [7] The Village as Teacher Initiative. These initiatives are the basis for achieving the vision and desired outcomes with the following results: [1] 40% reduction in the number of temporarily displaced [suspended and expelled] youth from Tacoma Schools by 2010; [2] 25% increase in academic performance of temporarily displaced youth returning to public schools from MMA within six months after their return; [3] 25% reduction in the number of juveniles entering the criminal justice system from Pierce County by 2010; [4] 30% reduction by 2010 in the percentages of student ethnic groups who are disproportionately suspended and expelled from Tacoma Public Schools; and [5] achieve financial equity for suspended/expelled students so that the money from the public school system in Tacoma follows the child by June 30, 2008.

Getting these results calls for transformational and collaborative approaches to make a sustainable difference. The outcomes and vision above are not likely to be achieved within the context of the current mindsets, system cultures, policies and methods. MMA is working with REAP Unlimited Consulting and its model for transforming and creating new realities, and several progressive partners [Evergreen State College-Tacoma, Parents for Student Success, Tacoma Urban League, First Place School of Seattle, Ministerial Alliance, The Money Tree, State Farm, Foundation for Multi-Cultural Solutions, Multi-Centric Institute] to do what is necessary to make the vision reality. Collectively, the partners are establishing and conducting a series of local, state and national "Collaboratoriums" between 2007-2010 to engage leaders in the vision and to take action to save these children who have been forgotten. While the problems are national and far beyond Tacoma, Tacoma-Pierce County is MMA's chosen laboratory to develop a best practices model to assist this population.

The new initiatives and ongoing services result in a budget that is approximately 300 percent over the 2007 budget. Moving to a new planning cycle of September through August each year will help position MMA to generate necessary resources and build its capacity to achieve the vision to "Embrace the Indigenous Genius in Every Child."

We believe that MMA achieves positive results with a very difficult target population because every student is treated with unconditional acceptance, love, respect and recognition for all positive gains, large or small. We believe this is the unique aspect of the program.

Students leave MMA oriented to a new vision of what is possible, immersed in academics, and return to their schools with a model for success.

To quote youth who have been through the program: “I like this school because when we have problems, we can sit and talk about them instead of fighting. We get taught to understand each other well. We fix each other food. We talk positive instead of negative. We talk about how we are going to act when we get back to school.” Another student reported, “In the past I always got in trouble because I let other people control my mind because I thought it was cool. Then I got in trouble with the law and got kicked out of school. I talked to my P. O. who referred me to MMA. Then I started to listen to the teachers and after awhile I could notice that there is a difference here. It feels good to be out of trouble and to learn from my past mistakes. Now only I can control my mind.”

PART ONE. MMA’S STRATEGIC PLANNING JOURNEY-REAP UNLIMITED

- A. MMA’S WORK REQUIRES TRANSFORMATION
- B. ON STRATEGIC PLANNING & TRANSFORMATION
- C. DEVELOPING THIS PLAN

“When we look deeply at the roots of a situation, we can see our mindsets, beliefs, assumptions and the origin of things. We can see how and why we created the current reality. If we want to transform the situation, we must first transform ourselves to go beyond the limits of our patterns and the status quo. Without our own transformations, the plans we make recreate the very problems we intend to resolve.

-Dr. Darya Funches, REAP Unlimited

A. MMA'S WORK REQUIRES TRANSFORMATION-DARYA FUNCHES, REAP

Most social change efforts do not go deeply enough into the root causes of a situation nor broadly enough into the context of the situation to transform a long-standing recurrent issue into a sustainable new reality. Some programs provide new housing for those in public housing projects without providing personal transformation experiences to breakthrough patterns of multi-generational welfare. Others provide new employment and income opportunities without financial literacy or transformational work regarding money. The result is: things change on the surface, but there is no sustainable difference. There is no transformation, no resolution.

Fulfilling MMA's mission and vision require transformations for all involved, including the Board, management, staff and partners of MMA. The vision is new territory, outside the box of the current reality and conventions. Yet when all parties examine the state of the problem regarding suspended and expelled youth, we have to recognize that the resolution is not within the mindsets and conventions in which school systems, communities, leaders and parents are currently operating. The vision inspires most of us, however, because of a spark within that knows the potential is right, real and true.

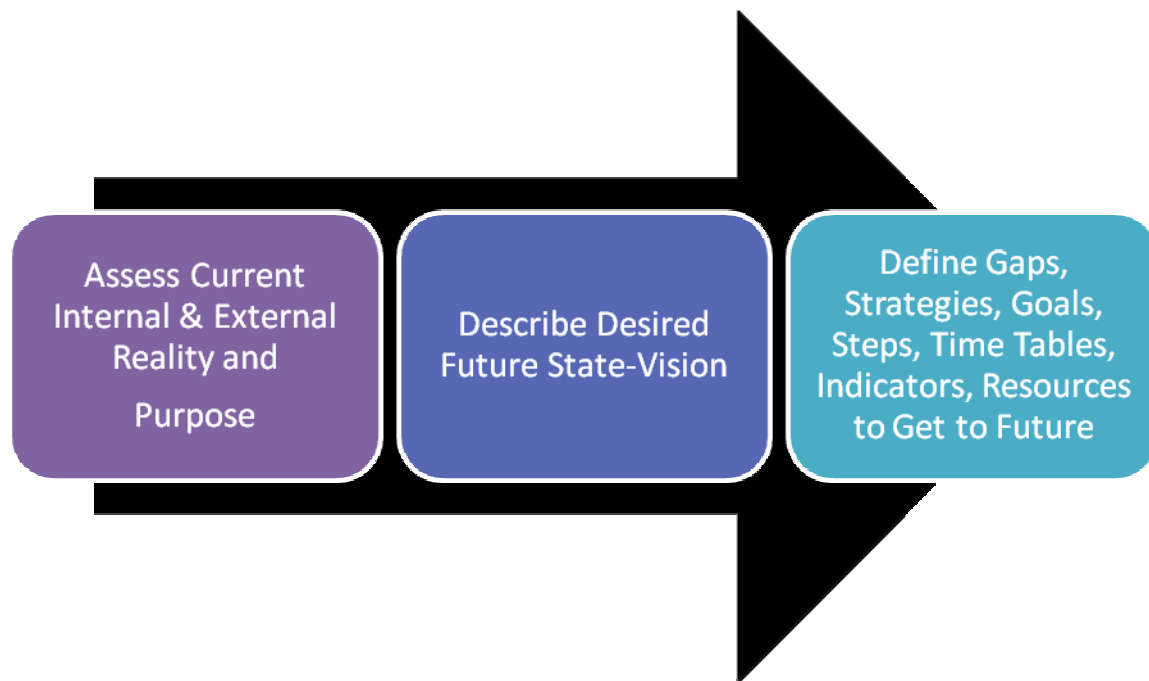
We know that the current reality is not working to help all children succeed in public school, and we have to examine how we're each helping to maintain the status quo.

When we transform, we become more of who we truly are in terms of core purpose and highest potential, just as the caterpillar becomes the butterfly. We also uncover and let go of patterns that no longer align with the direction we are going. Familiar, comfortable outmoded patterns do not disappear just because we direct ourselves toward a new reality. These disappear because we recognize that the cost of our patterns is greater than we are willing to pay as we engage new visions and renewed purposes. We heal where necessary, let go, move on and garner the courage to act in accordance with the vision.

We move into and align with the reality we want to create, rather than building more and more programs to provide services in response to the problems of the current state. Approaching change this way only chases the unreachable problem and perpetuates it.

MMA's new vision is inspired and, by definition, lofty. That is why it is a vision. As such, it is a potential reality, deserving as much or more attention and exploration as what we normally think of as actual reality. The focus of transformation is to bring truth to the present, past and potential future and commit to the vision and the alignments it requires. MMA has the courage to do just this. Some may say "This vision is not realistic." I say "That's why it is called a vision. It is not yet actual reality, and that's our collective job—to make the vision real."

B. STRATEGIC PLANNING & TRANSFORMATION-DARYA FUNCHES, REAP



There are as many approaches to strategic planning as there are organizations doing it. Most nonprofit organizations, however, involve at least the three components above.

Some Common Assumptions Underlying Strategic Planning

- Strategic planning increases future success and saves operational time in the future.
- The people doing the strategic planning have mindsets to see beyond the limitations of the past and present.
- The desired future does not exist in the present; it is a destination to which we travel, step by step, in time.
- The desired future is achieved by a complex set of step by step actions over time, including monitoring results.
- Future choices and decisions are made based on the plan or its future revisions

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The transformation work and research done by Dr. Darya Funches over the past 30 years indicates that the potential future exists now and that bringing a new reality into form does not occur incrementally, but all of a sudden, based on focused intention, healing of the past, and alignment of thought, actions, emotions, policies, rewards, technology, investors, and leadership.

REAP Unlimited's approach to transformation influences how we conduct strategic planning, since its purpose is to help an organization achieve its desired future. Below are some of the relevant premises influencing our work:

- The past, present and future co-exist simultaneously.
- Breaking through limiting habits, styles, patterns and mindsets releases energy for the vision and creativity about a new reality vs coming up with new versions of the present state. [R= Reflect and Release Limitations]
- Visionaries see the potential reality as if it is actual reality, and so do others once they are engaged in and by the vision. [E=Envision and Engage the Potential Future]
- The vision comes into form through devising and employing activators that represent the vision's inherent design, catalyzing movement in leaps, not incremental linear sequential steps. [Activate and Assimilate the Vision]
- The combined forces of focus, intention, unleashed energy from released patterns and catalytic activators result in the potential reality becoming the actual reality in observable physical form. [Position and Produce the Results]
- The organization's desired state unfolds in the present through a variety of coinciding and synchronous events and choices between it and the environment.
- Transformation is not planned change; and it occurs at the deepest levels of the system, influencing beliefs and assumptions as well as daily operations.

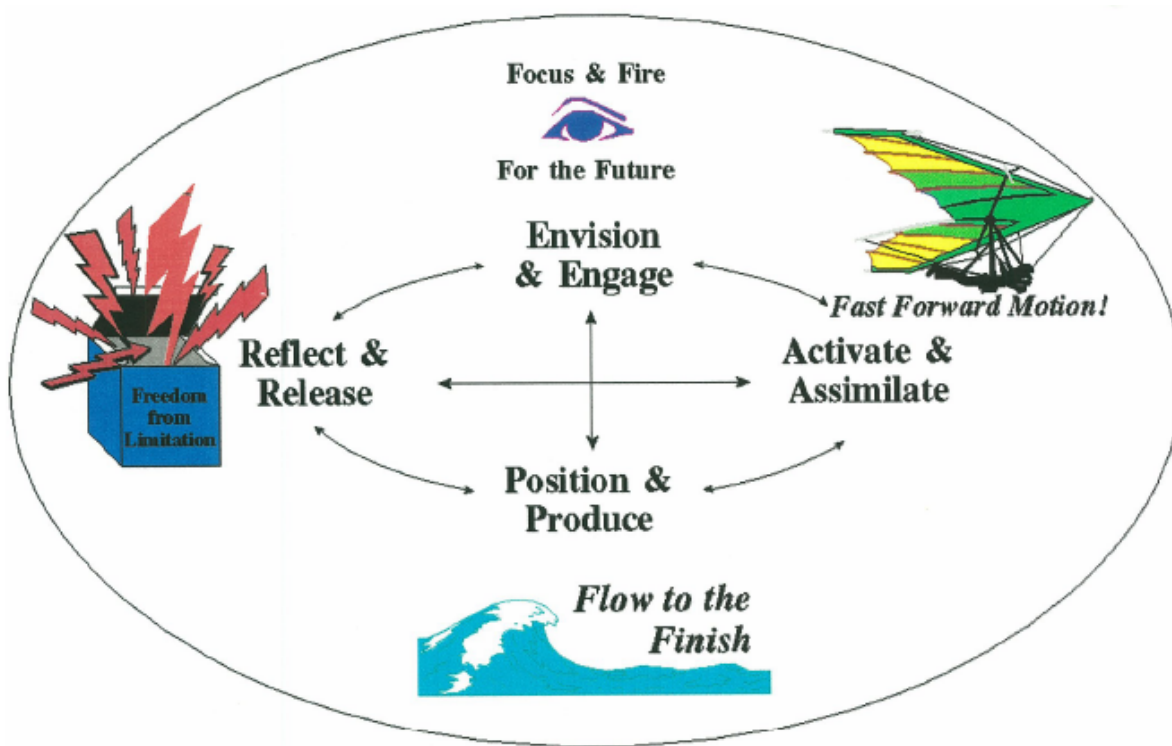
On the following pages, see two of the images of the basic REAP™ model, which operates in simultaneous and organic motion, rather than linear sequential steps.

Components of the model as it relates to Strategic Planning include:

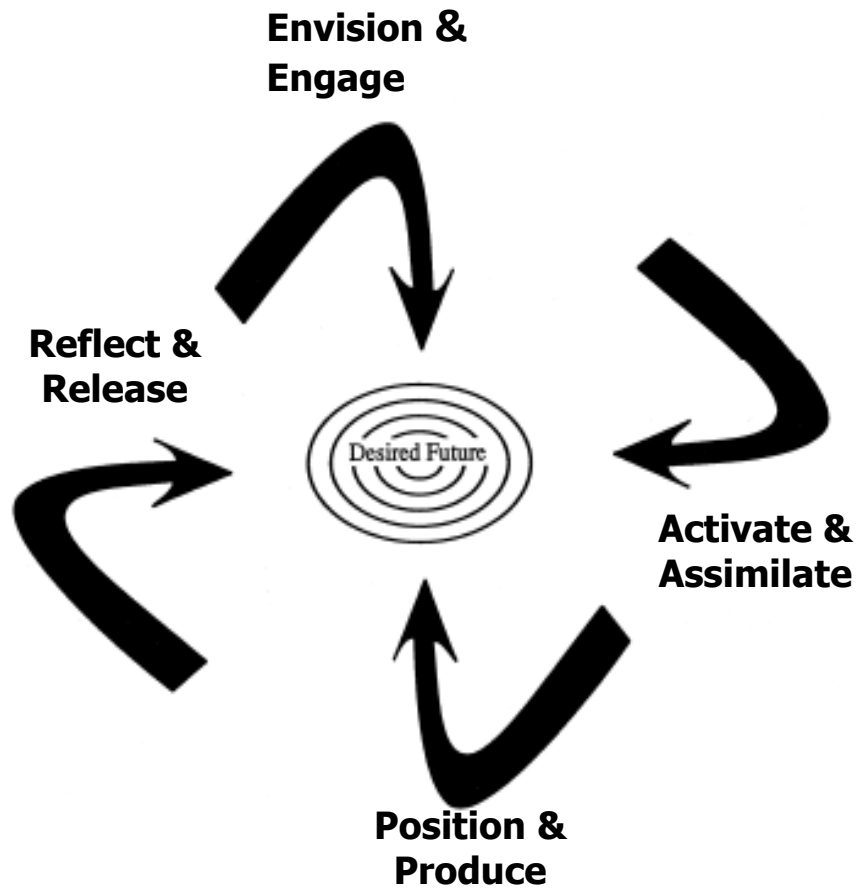
- Individual and Team Leadership Intensives: Recognizing cultural assets and limits; old wounds influencing policies, practices and performance; shifting old patterns, healing, forming vision, determining capabilities and needs, clarifying purpose and roles. While this process goes on, opportunities arise that are consistent with the plan, so the vision is already being achieved.
- Strategic Intensives: Creating breakthroughs in consciousness about the vision and how to catalyze it; defining Strategic Initiatives and their components which activate the vision. We use time and specific results and measures as a way of communicating with others about our intentions and agreed upon ways of determining the product of the efforts.
- Maintaining Focused Attention on Vision: The vision, and the system's story about achieving it, remain the guiding forces, along with the representative activators. The Strategic Initiatives and some of their components are activators in the Strategic Plan. The team determines which of these has the most leverage for creating the new reality and the intended measurable outcomes.

In some planned change efforts, the attention goes into the actions listed to reach objectives and goals, losing sight of the vision. So as the world changes, one is not able to focus on the vision, even with contingency scenarios. In REAP's approach leaders learn to practice discernment about the choices and opportunities that unfold in relation to the vision and become more accurate about making the potential reality into the actual reality.

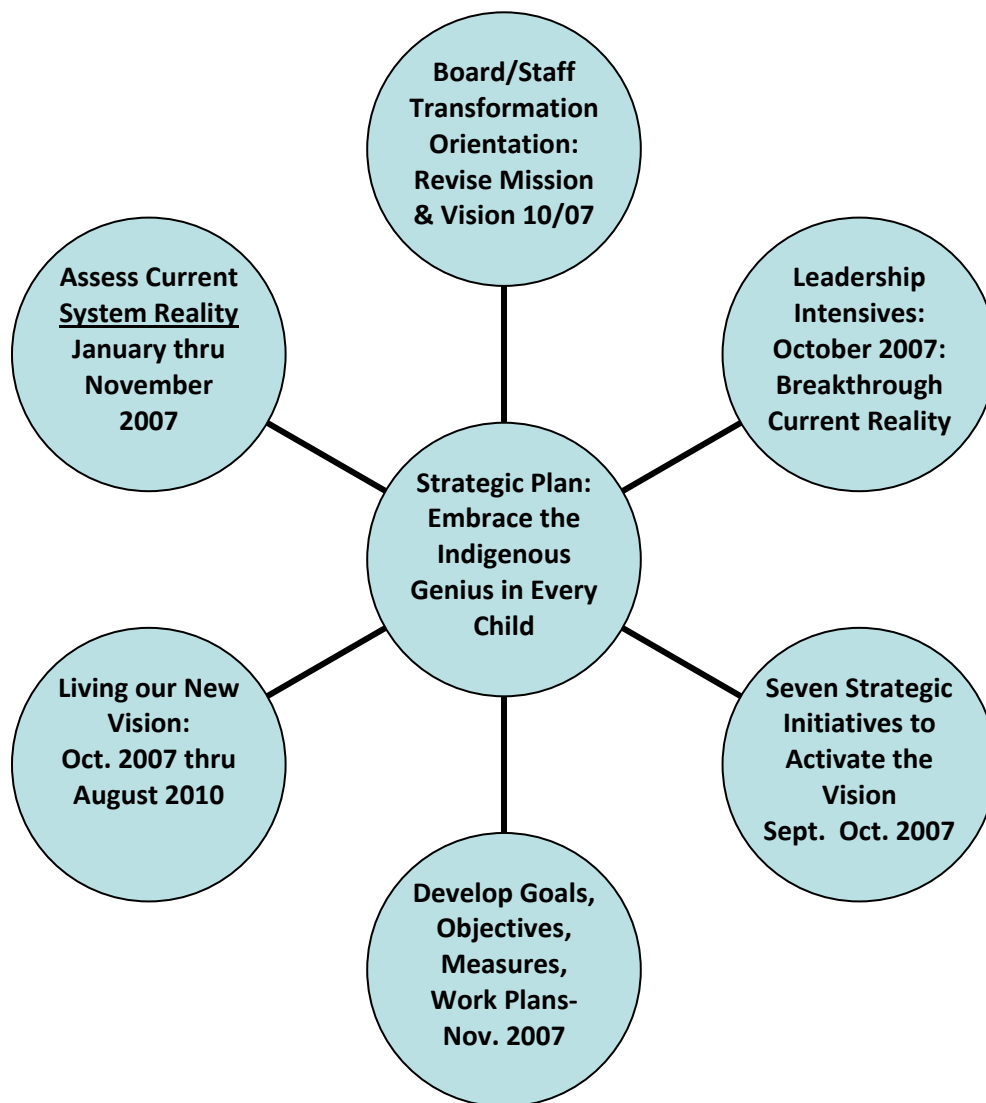
The REAP Model



The REAP Model in Simultaneous Motion



C. DEVELOPING THIS PLAN



1. Current Reality, Patterns & Origins [REAP]: Winter Report, Capacity Building Assessment, SWOT from Stakeholders, Search the State of the Problem, Competition & Performance Audit.
2. Board/Staff Orientations on REAP Transformation System and Strategic Planning: Revised Mission and Vision
3. Individual & Team Intensives: Shift old patterns, create vision story [REAP Model]
4. Form 7 Strategic Initiatives to Activate Vision & Breakthrough Old Realities [REAP]
5. Translate Initiatives into Goals/Objectives/Measures/Work Plans/Contingencies
6. Complete scripting the new reality, the journey and the internal and external transformation processes to manifest the vision.

PART TWO. PURPOSE AND DIRECTION

- A. A STATE OF EMERGENCY IN TACOMA AND BEYOND
- B. MISSION AND CORE VALUES
- C. DESIRED OUTCOMES
- D. VISION AND VISION STORY
- E. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

“Sometimes we need to change the way we think and speak about what we are doing. We have been calling the students “suspended and expelled” because the school system refers to them this way. This can have a negative connotation. [When we revise our mission] we need to think of them as students who are temporarily displaced from public education. We help them return.”

Keith James, Board
President, MMA 2007

A. A STATE OF EMERGENCY IN TACOMA & BEYOND

When Dr. Maxine Mimms founded MMA, she and other staff searched to find answers to the question “Who is responsible for these children?” Staff has been equally challenged finding sufficient statistics on the situation in a form that tells us more about what is happening with this population locally and statewide by ethnic group.

1. Suspended and Expelled students form a population for which no single entity is responsible. This gap in responsibility forms a gap in accountability, making it difficult to find out the statistics, even at local levels so as to define patterns and trends. Despite data gaps, we know this is a national problem, not a problem owned by a particular region.

2. What happens to suspended and expelled students? In most school districts, suspension or expulsion essentially bars the student from school property and public education for a designated period of time. While some school districts have a limited number of alternative placements for disruptive youth, in most districts, suspension or expulsion leaves the student without benefit of an alternative educational placement. Students who have a supportive family or teacher may be fortunate enough to transfer to another public or private school. Unfortunately, under the GFSA(Guns Free School Act), about 57% of the expelled students are left without access to public education or productive structured alternatives that would help keep them “off the streets” and out of any further trouble.

The amazing thing to me is that there is a war on children, waged by our society, including some of us who are here to protect the children. We have to stop criminalizing and destroying the children with ideas such as “zero-tolerance.”

Michael Twiggs,
MMA Technology

3. Adopting a stance of “zero tolerance” in schools is part of co-creating the current reality. According to Marian Wright Edelman of the Children’s Defense Fund, schools began adopting “zero tolerance” policies in the late 1980s, taking the term from the war on drugs. Amidst debate in Congress over "super predators" and predictions of a coming and dramatic surge in juvenile crime which never materialized, these policies hit the national level when President Clinton signed the *Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994*, requiring a one-calendar year expulsion for possession of a firearm and referral of law-violating students to the juvenile or criminal justice systems.

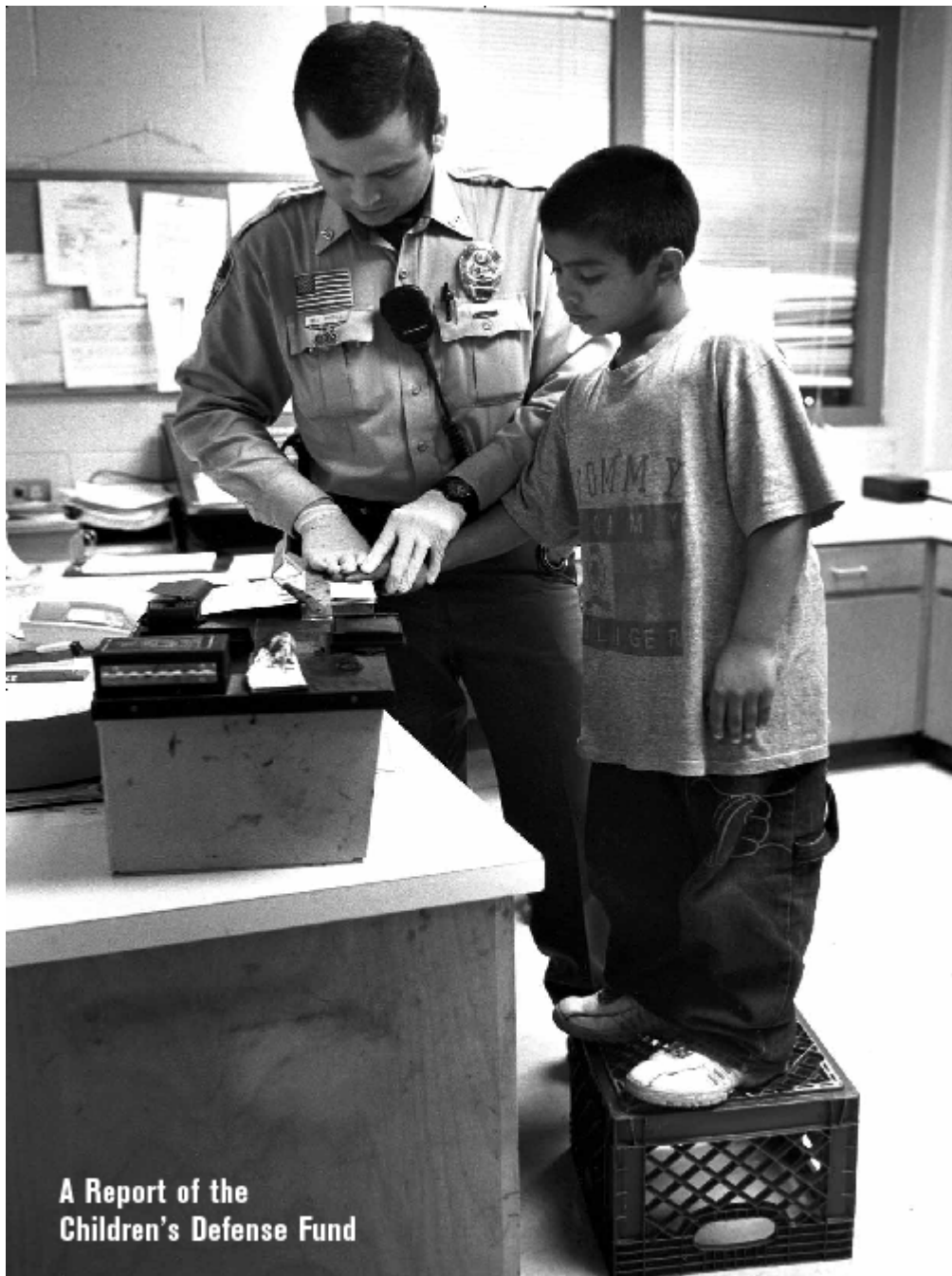
4. Implementation of a "zero tolerance" policy in public schools has created more problems than it has solved. The result has been the suspension and expulsion of African American, Native American, and Hispanic youth in numbers that are disproportionate to their percentage of the total population in public schools.

5. It has been most damaging that these children have been referred to the juvenile justice system for offenses that would normally be handled by school administration. Most states and local school districts responded to the new law by broadening the mandate of zero tolerance beyond the federal mandate of weapons to include drugs, alcohol, fighting, threats, or swearing.

6. Even at a national level, we know that the suspension and expulsion phenomenon disproportionately affects students of color, leading to dropouts. National studies have indicated that 7 percent of students nationally are suspended or expelled, and that 25 percent of African-American male students are suspended or expelled (more than one million). Suspended students in 26 states have no form of education. In inner-city schools, more than 65 percent of all students are suspended or expelled and drop-out rates exceed 50 percent. The vast majority of incarcerated youth have been suspended or expelled and more than 80 percent of incarcerated adults are school dropouts.

7. We realize that institutional racism is at the root of this problem. There is no evidence that African-American children act out more than others. Studies show that the disproportionality in school discipline is not due to characteristics of African-American students, but due to bias and discrimination in the system. The nation has a great need for a Best Practice model for this target population. MMA is striving to become this model. In doing so, we intend to have a positive impact on dismantling institutional racism and other forms of discrimination affecting this population in public education.

8. Any of us who are willing to look at the faces of reality, despite gaps in the data and research, can recognize a "pipeline," as described by the Children's Defense Fund, moving our youth "from the cradle to prison." The images on the following two pages from the Report of the Children's Defense Fund make this clear to us.

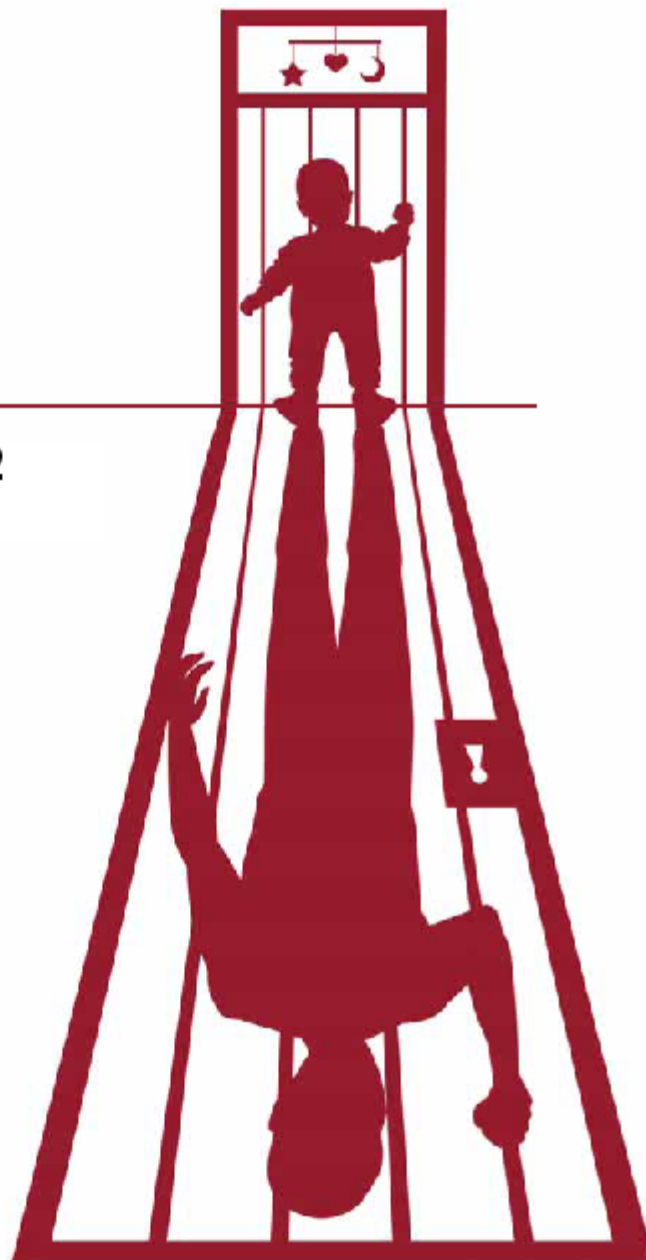


A Report of the
Children's Defense Fund

America's Cradle to Prison PipelineSM

Part I

Chapter 2



Tacoma Public Schools and Washington State

1. In a recent article [2007] on “Dropout Factories” in the Seattle Times, we found that Tacoma and Washington State represent the state of emergency. “In about 7.6 percent of Washington's 290 high schools, 40 percent of the students enrolled as freshmen don't make it to their senior year. The 22 schools in Washington that researchers call ‘dropout factories’ are spread throughout the state, but are found mostly in poor rural and urban school districts. Every comprehensive high school in Tacoma made the list, but none in Seattle or Spokane did.” MMA addresses this aspect of the problem with a combination of intervention and prevention services.

2. There is a lack of community based programming for this population in Tacoma. MMA addresses the lack of community-based programming for suspended and expelled students in Tacoma/Pierce County. Currently, while on suspension or expulsion status, these students do not have access to any school programs, including free lunches, although the schools still receive funding based on Average Daily Attendance [ADA]. For the most part this target population is already behind academically. Without a school program, the majority of participants fall even further behind as a result of isolation from the educational process. MMA’s approach breaks down isolation through mentorship, excursions into the public and private sector in Tacoma, the demonstration project with Evergreen State College, and services and education in the community.

3. According to Tacoma Public Schools, Seattle Public Schools and national sources, suspended and expelled students are far more likely to commit juvenile offenses and end up in juvenile institutions. Since suspensions and expulsions involve a high percentage of minority youth, the problem of minority youth being overrepresented in juvenile institutions increases. MMA’s intention is to develop a Best Practices Model that breaks through and eliminates this pattern.

4. In a report by Tacoma Public Schools regarding high school suspensions and expulsions in school year 2003/2004, the data by ethnic group illustrates the disproportionality issue. There were 223 expulsions of African American youth compared to only 204 Caucasian youth. For suspensions, there were 664 suspended African American students compared to 783 Caucasians. The total Caucasian population in high schools was 5,697 students while African Americans totaled 2,083. The Mimms Academy Program directly addresses these problems. For additional information please see: Seattle Post-Intelligencer, January 11, 2006, “Race Gap in School Discipline Persists in Seattle:” and briefing papers entitled “**Beyond the Tunnel Problem**” published by Youth Transition Funders Group at www.ytfg.org

5. Parents and youth do not know their rights regarding public education. There is an appeal process if you are expelled, but rarely do parents of African American youth appeal the expulsion process because they do not know a process of how to advocate for their children in the educational system. On the whole, we have found that education about advocacy is essential and this service is part of MMA's approach, through one of our partners, Parents for Student Success.

6. It is not enough to offer programs that help the youth; the problem has roots in the community, in the family and in the school systems. Many youth who attend MMA experience overlapping challenges, such as being in foster care; living at or below the poverty line; gang involvement; substance abuse; fetal alcohol syndrome; domestic violence; homelessness; and learning disabilities, in addition to the extreme isolation they experience in relationship to broader society. MMA's approach includes breaking through this isolation and providing the necessary support resources directly and through our partnerships with Multicultural Institute, Tacoma Urban League and through our partnerships with Multicultural Institute, Tacoma Urban League and Parents for Student Success.

7. Policies of "zero tolerance," "no child left behind," and practices of teaching to pass the state competency tests, only send more children into the cradle to prison pipeline.

8. Reversing this pipeline to provide education, treatment and prevention is challenging in Washington state and other places where the money does not follow the child. Once school districts have procured their funding based on Average Daily Attendance, the money stays with the school district, whether the child is in school or not. Therefore, suspended and expelled youth do not have access to the public school services although the school system receives funding based on their enrollment.

9. All public and private systems are affected by the problems of this population. As a community, we must address it, and help others in the country do the same. Through a series of collaboratoriums in our strategic initiatives, we intend to refine our model and help others address the needs of this unique population.

B. OUR MISSION AND CORE VALUES

Maxine Mimms Academies' purpose is to ensure the basic human right of education to students who are temporarily displaced from public education by providing skilled intake, intervention, academic instruction and prevention that consistently result in the successful return and completion of students' education. MMA's proven model promotes mutual respect and personal responsibility in a safe and healthy learning environment, and develops the essential knowledge, skills and abilities for social and economic empowerment of students, families and communities.

**Core Values--
Truth & Reconciliation, Mutual Respect, Love,
Service, Health, Positive Communication, &
Encouragement**

C. DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR POPULATION

DESIRED OUTCOME	BY WHEN
1. Reduce the number of temporarily displaced [suspended and expelled] youth from Tacoma Schools by 40 percent compared to Academic year ending in August 2004	50 percent by August 31, 2010 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 percent by August 31, 2008 • 15 percent by August 31, 2009 • 40 percent by August 31, 2010
2. Academic performance of temporarily displaced youth returning to public schools from MMA has increased by at least 25 percent compared to GPA upon referral into MMA	25 percent improvement in GPA within 6 months from level @ referral into MMA
3. Reduction of the number of juveniles entering the criminal justice system from Pierce County by 25 percent from the 2004 number	5 percent reduction by August 31, 2008 10 percent reduction by August 31, 2009 25 percent reduction by August 31, 2010
4. Reduce the percentages of students who are suspended and expelled disproportionately from different ethnic groups in Tacoma Public Schools by 30% compared to a 2003-2004 baseline.	10 percent reduction by August 31, 2008 10 percent reduction by August 31, 2009 10 percent reduction by August 31, 2010
5. Achieve financial equity for suspended/expelled students so that the money from the public school system in Tacoma follows the child by June 30, 2008	By June 30, 2008

D. VISION STATEMENT & STORY

Our Story: Embrace the Indigenous Genius of Every Child

It is the year 2012. Public school teachers in Tacoma and beyond have stopped focusing on Attendance, Attention and Assignments, and have started focusing on Recreation, Respect and Relationships.

The world of "zero tolerance" is a sad memory of a time when we lost our way as a society, declared war on our kids, and made criminals of those who dared to resist a system gone mad. We've indigenous genius of the public school come a long way – to where the each child is embraced by system and community.

We've just done a be the lowest in the Tacoma Jason Lee Lincoln High up on the results started with needs of what we "suspended and

MMA's Vision Statement

Healthy children who succeed as lifelong learners, educated in environments that recognize the genius in them and embrace the indigenous nature of each child.

Dr. Maxine Mimms

tour of what used to performing schools School District - Middle School and School - to follow of our journey that addressing the used to call expelled" students.

The journey that began in 2004 with the recognition that a startling number of students were being denied the right to public education has become a moral imperative for communities throughout the nation. The disproportionate incidence of suspension and expulsion of African American, Native American, and Hispanic students sounded an alarm that was heard in schools coast to coast. It signaled a time for a change – big change – and change we have.

We drove over to the Tacoma Campus of Evergreen State College, also known by us as "The house that Maxine built." In 2007, Evergreen had become part of our academic instruction for the temporarily displaced students. When we walked in the door, we ran into three former students who had been with us in 2007 when we started the Evergreen component at MMA - Briana, Inez and Damion.

We waited until we got to the Commons at TESC to look at the new reports sent to us by the Washington State OSPI and the Tacoma Superintendent of Schools. We were eager to see what impact our work had made on the suspended and expelled population.

We caught ourselves when we remembered we had stopped calling them "suspended and expelled" and had begun to think and speak of them as students temporarily displaced from public education. When we opened the first report, what did we see?

We saw the statistics categorized by Tacoma Public Schools as "Number of Temporarily Displaced" students in 2011-2012.

"When we change something in our mission, vision, vision story or goals, we should keep track of the change and the reason we made it, so that others will know, and we will remember, why we made that change. It helps with the idea of best practices." – Ms. Vanessa Brown, Office Manager, MMA 2007

Vanessa said "Remember when we all were wounded healers? We were bleeding and we were setting up triage to help the other wounded students, and their parents too."

"How can we forget?" said Michael. "Yes, that was one of the best investments we made in our capacity building effort," said Maxine, "sending all of us out to Mossyrock to work with Darya!" "I realized that I had some of the same personal limitations from my educational experiences with schools that our students have, although my history was somewhat different," said Vanessa.

MMA students have returned to public education from MMA as improved learners. They know about knowing and have learned about learning, given the confidence and fundamental ability to advance in education and other life endeavors.

Parents have the skills to manage their children's education. They advocate for their children's education in the community and with schools, being able to identify gaps and request what is needed from appropriate systems to close the gaps in public education for their child.

E. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

“We expect our children to overcome obstacles.
We take that for granted.
We expect nothing less than each person
Answering the call of their perfected self.” [E. Laye]

- ❖ Parental understanding of how to advocate for their child’s education is the answer to a system that is unable to cope with cultural differences.
- ❖ Self efficacy is the answer to a system of suspension and expulsion over which the child has no control.
- ❖ The development of self efficacy can only occur in a place of safety, an oasis of hope, where students can reflect and begin to tell new stories.
- ❖ Self efficacy is developed by a shift in language: “I do not go to a failing school; my school is the greatest school.” “Maxine Mimms Academies is the only solution for me because I am the solution for the world.” “I return to my school as a success because I am the solution for my school.”
- ❖ The reality of the hip-hop culture must meet the demands of a future; the absence of hope must transcend into the ability to forgive, dream, and tell new stories.
- ❖ Community institutions must speak a new language: the language of WASL, of standardized tests. Business owners much preach it from behind the cash register. Pastors much preach it from the pulpit. Doctors and nurses much preach it in offices and emergency rooms. Police Officers must preach it from squad cars.
- ❖ Parents must speak a new language: the language of zero tolerance, “why my child?” and WASL.
- ❖ Parents, children, community institutions must cross the cultural barriers to welcome each other, to have a conversation, to take in, to love, to forgive, to become healthy.
- ❖ The child, the parent, the pastor, the business owner, doctor, lawyer, and governor must know that each child is valuable. Each child is good.

PART THREE. VIEWS OF THE CURRENT STATE

A. BACKGROUNDS AND STRUCTURE: BOARD, MANAGEMENT, STAFF AND PARTNERS

B. CURRENT COMPONENTS, CURRICULUM AND SERVICES

C. COMPETITIVE PERSPECTIVE: OTHER PROVIDERS & BEST PRACTICES

D. TOTAL ADMINISTRATION AND TOTAL OPERATIONS PROGRESSIONS

E. STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

F. FALL 2007 REPORT ON ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY TOOL

G. INCOME SOURCES: 2005 THROUGH 2007

H. EXPENSES CHART: 2005 THROUGH 2007

A. BACKGROUND & STRUCTURE: BOARD, MANAGEMENT, STAFF & PARTNERS

MMA is a 501 c [3] corporation, incorporated in the State of Washington in 2004. It was founded under the visionary leadership of Dr. Maxine Mimms, a prominent figure in progressive education in the US and the Pacific Northwest in particular.

EXPERTISE AND TENURE OF MMA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS-2007

MMA's Board of Directors has recently changed in 2007, and now includes new members in addition to retaining some of the previous members. Although they bring a variety of expertise relevant for MMA's work, Board Development is one of the priorities for the Capacity Building Initiative discussed later in the plan.

1. Mr. Keith James, Board President. Mr. James is a Washington State Criminal Justice Supervisor and brings over 20 years of experience in administration, management and social change to MMA's Board. He has been a dedicated and active Board member since 2005.

2. Steve Whittier, Board Vice President. Mr. Whittier has extensive background in the insurance industry and is active in community leadership and helping youth. With his professional experience and community activity, he brings an important perspective of small businesses in our region. He is the previous Board President and has been an active Board member since 2005.

3. Virginia Hankins, Board Secretary. Ms. Hankins is an Educator with over 20 years experience in education as a teacher in Tacoma Washington Public Schools. She has been an MMA Board member since 2007.

4. Ebony White, Board Treasurer. Ms. White is Manager of Finance at Weyerhaeuser Corporation, and is a non-profit financial consultant in the community. She is new on the MMA Board as of 2007.

5. Neal McCullough. Mr. McCullough is a Geologist and a world traveler who works as a supervisor in railroad development. He has been a Board member since 2005.

6. Mark Wheeler, Attorney at Law. Mr. Wheeler is a Graduate of Harvard University and leads a successful law practice in the Seattle area. He is active as a Community Leader and as a member of other Boards of Directors for educational and community organizations. He has been an active Board member since 2006.

7. Eugene Montgomery. Mr. Montgomery has many years of experience as a Community Activist and Change Agent. He has strong networks in northwest communities and provides excursions through Amtrak for inner city youth. He has been an active member of the MMA Board since 2006.

8. Laura James. Ms. James has substantial experience as a Community Activist, Administrator, Educator and Leader in the community. She is a past and current participant on other Boards, having assisted them in major new ventures and development efforts. She has been an MMA Board member since 2005.

9. Stephen P. Smith, Attorney at Law. Mr. Smith has extensive experience in human resource management and development, liability in the workplace, policy assistance, fundraising, management facilitation, and technical literacy. He is a 2007 addition to the Board of Directors, bringing a wealth of talent for our work in capacity building.

10. Robert Rieder. Mr. Rieder has over 30 years experience working in health insurance, financial services, and as an administrator and fund developer to urban projects, including educational projects. He is a new addition to the MMA Board in 2007.

MMA Youth Advisory Board

1. Briana Saunders is a 15 year old youth consultant to the MMA Youth Advisory Board as of 2007.

2. Miguel Smith is a 15 year old youth consultant to the MMA Youth Advisory Board as of 2007.

MMA MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Dr. Maxine Mimms, Founder and Executive Director of MMA. Dr. Mimms has extensive experience in organizational leadership and all aspects of public education. She is the founder of Evergreen State College –Tacoma Campus and has over 50 years experience as an innovative educator and consultant throughout the country. She earned her Ph.D. from Union Institute in Educational Leadership and has been a successful educator and leader at every level of public and private education. Over the past 50 years, Dr. Mimms has been honored and awarded across the nation and in the Pacific Northwest for her contributions to education and community. Her contributions to service and education in her community are legion. Tens of thousands of today's leaders and educators are products of her service and dedication as a pioneer, leader, educator, speaker and author.

Ms. Isa Farrington-Nichols, Director of Quality Control for MMA. Since the inception of the Maxine Mimms Academies Ms Nichols has held overall leadership responsibility for finance and administration of the agency. In addition to her MMA responsibilities, she is founder of Innovative Sound Advice LLC and has provided education and training to business owners regarding taxes, accounting, financial management, administration and marketing for 25 years. She is also founder of Jireh Shalom Foundation, focused on intervention and prevention of domestic violence worldwide. She is a double BA graduate of San Jose State University, a frequent public speaker and author of a soon-to-be-published book, Genesis: The True DC Sniper Story Untold.

Mr. Michael Twiggs, Director of Technology and Project Management for MMA. Mr. Twiggs develops MMA's technology curriculum, supports and manages MMA's website and Computer Laboratory, and is the internal Project Manager for the Gates Strategic Planning/Capacity Building start up effort. Mr. Twiggs is manager of several computer companies and a provider of technical assistance to entrepreneurs. For MMA he brings a rich background in project management, low income housing, and working with differences. He serves as a Project Manager for MMA and assists at-risk families with conflict resolution/prevention.

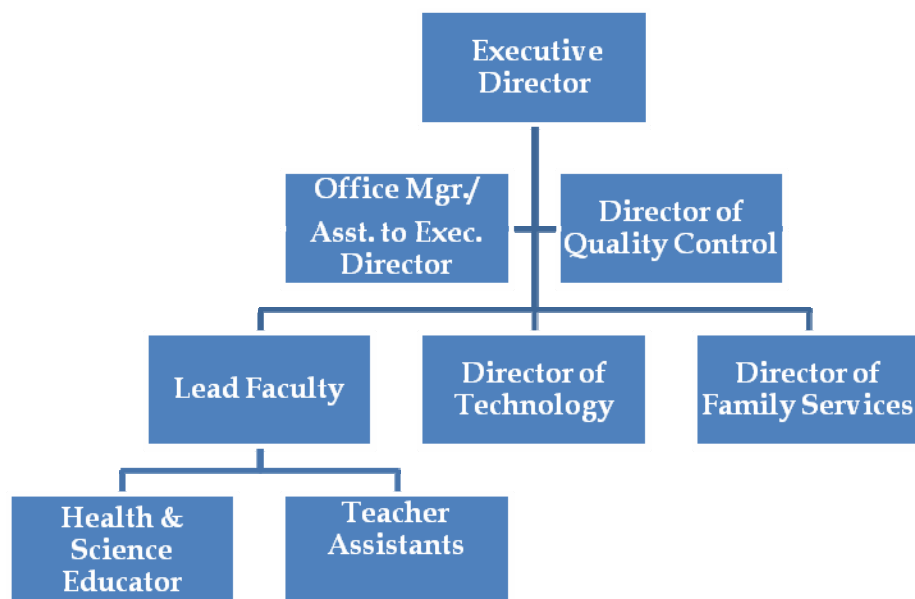
Mr. Larry Paul, Lead Faculty for MMA. Mr. Paul is the Lead Teacher at MMA and is the frontline experimenter with its philosophy of integrating academic immersion with unconditional love, acceptance and discipline. Mr. Paul has a Masters Degree in Teaching from Antioch University, and is an advocate in the Tacoma community for at-risk families.

Dr. Theodore Mimms, Naturopath, Science & Health Education for MMA. Dr.

Theodore Mimms is a well established health educator in the Puget Sound region. He is currently teaching health and science at MMA and extends his teaching to families and community. He develops and coordinates MMA's Health Sciences and Wellness Fairs for MMA students, families and the Community. For the Evergreen State College component of MMA, he is developing the curriculum that links physiology to behavior, helping students learn the physiological roots of their academic, learning and behavioral challenges. Dr. Ted Mimms is a Doctor of Naturopathy.

Ms. Vanessa Brown, Office Manager for MMA. Ms. Brown has substantial experience as an Educational Advisor for middle school, high school, and adult students pursuing secondary education. She is the first point of contact for parents and students entering MMA, doing the intake, assessing their needs and referring them accordingly. In addition, she manages the complex administrative and daily support needs of staff, parents and students. She has a Bachelors Degree in Economics and Community Development and a Masters Degree in Education.

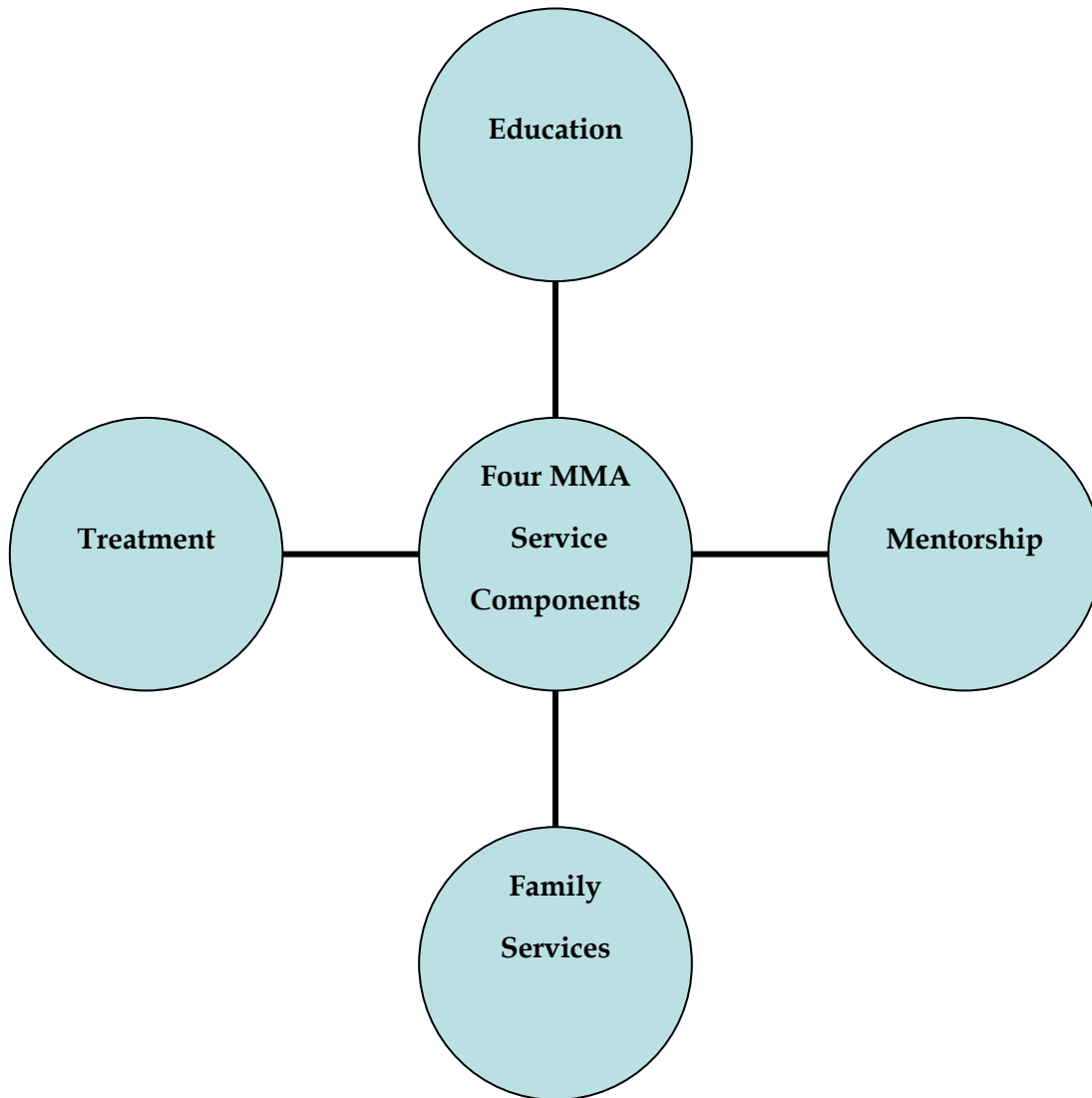
Current Organizational Chart



MMA's Current Partners

- 1. Evergreen State College, Tacoma Campus, Dr. Artee Young.** This partnership is for the Advanced Learning Initiative. Students attend two courses four days per week at the Tacoma campus, plus have a Synthesis session integrating what they have learned. Going forward, the College also has faculty who are willing to work with MMA on developing the model curriculum.
- 2. First Place School of Seattle.** MMA and First Place work together with the Opportunities Industrialization Council of Yakima in a longitudinal study on drop-out prevention that specifically targets low-income students of color in grades 5-12. The study, "Building Bridges," is funded by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. First Place is a private alternative school serving homeless youth in Seattle.
- 3. Tacoma Urban League.** MMA and the TUL are collaborating to support reducing the disproportionate contact that juveniles of color have with the criminal justice system, along with the Ministerial Alliance..
- 4. Foundation for Multicultural Solutions.** FMCS is MMA's partner for providing drug and alcohol treatment for MMA students and their families.
- 5. National Youth Congress.** NYC and MMA share a vision to see youth better integrated into the life of our communities and to see them established in meaningful careers. NYC delivers part of MMA's Inner City Excursions Program and conducts other workshops using their TRICS curriculum.
- 6. Parents for Student Success.** PFSS is MMA's partner for parental advocacy, teaching parents how to advocate for children in public school systems and how to modify their behavior and language with students, leading to more student success.
- 7. The Ministerial Alliance.** MMA and the Ministerial Alliance are collaborating to support reducing the disproportionate contact that juveniles of color have with the criminal justice system, along with Tacoma Urban League.
- 8. The Money Tree.** MMA and The Money Tree collaborate to provide financial literacy to students and their families in communities of color.
- 9. REAP Unlimited Consulting.** REAP Unlimited is a consulting firm bringing skills in transformation, creating new realities, leadership and capacity building. MMA and REAP are collaborating in the transformation of public school systems/public education. REAP also assists MMA in some aspects of its internal development.

B. CURRENT COMPONENTS, CURRICULUM & LEVELS OF SERVICE

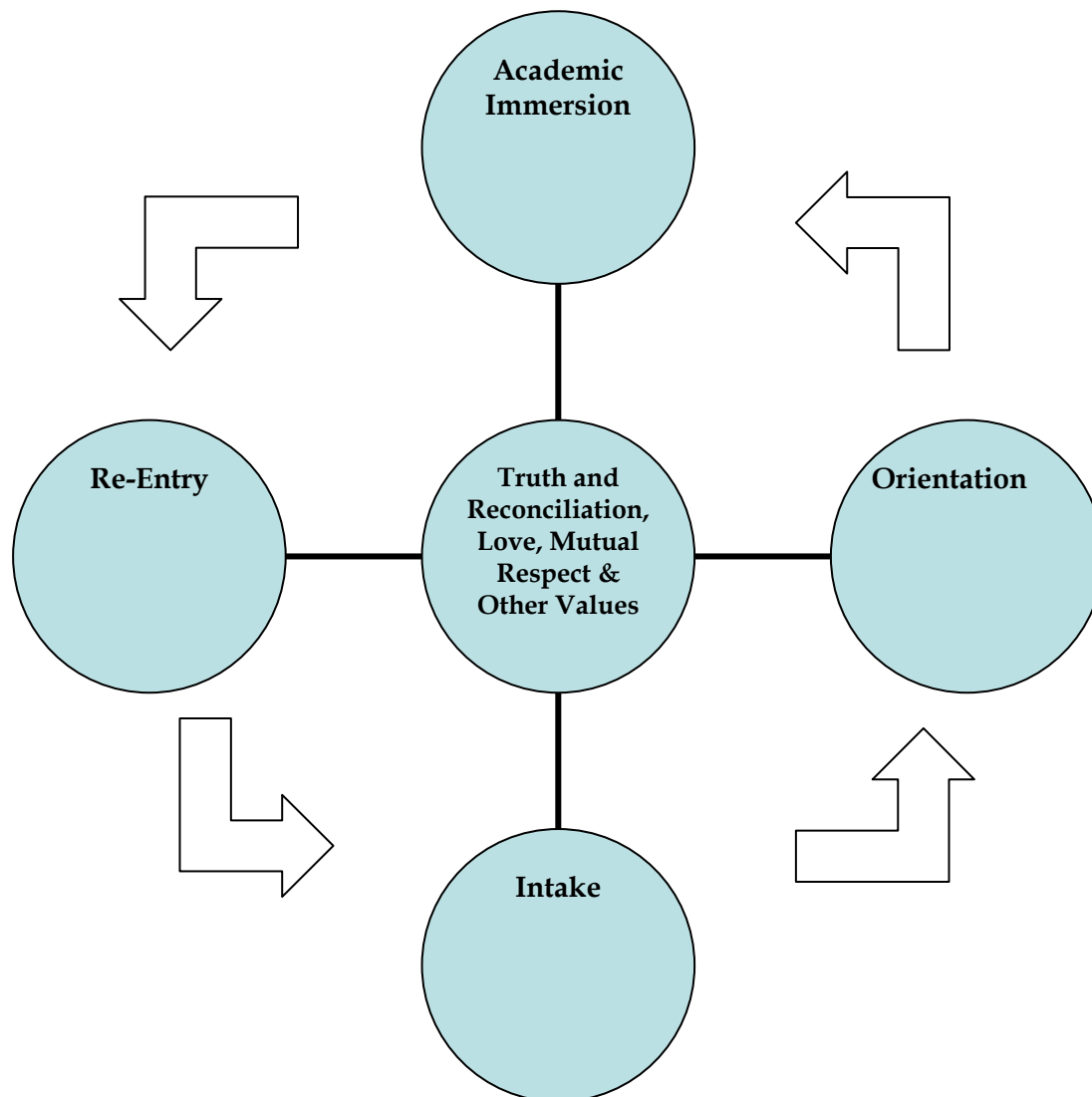


[We are] the paradigm for providing educational services to the growing disproportionate suspended and expelled youth. We are a day-time educational service program with re-entry advocacy that returns students back to public school. Our focus is not only the suspended and expelled student, but the suspended and expelled family.

Ms. Isa Nichols, Director of Quality Control, MMA, 2007

The Educational Component

The Educational Component has 4 stages: Intake, Orientation, Academic Immersion and Re-Entry.



Stage One-Intake: The intake process is simple. No child is turned away; no child's behavior is judged; all are included; none are excluded. Students come to us for fighting, carrying guns, mooning a teacher. Students come wild, angry, unable to sit, unable to focus, refusing to make eye contact. Children come hurting, whether with one parent, two parents, caring parents, absent parents, sick parents, dying parents, or foster parents. Children come from the best of homes and no homes – runaways. Students come from juvenile hall, and from the privilege of wealth.

White, Black, Latino, Asian, Middle Eastern, rich, poor, male and female, they come. Ages 11 to 18, they come. Every child, brilliant in his or her own right, every child different from the traditional classroom standard. Hormones kicking, children asking questions that go unanswered and unrecognized. When they come to MMA, they come home. They come to a spirit and an environment that says: "Welcome". You are welcome here. Here, we take you in. Here you are not wrong; you are all right with us.

Stage 2-Orientation: Isolation is reduced with the immediate assignment of mentors who are available 24 hours a day, and who remain with the child until graduation. Parents participate in a collaboratorium of extended family programs. Families receive counseling. The student and their families are allowed unlimited opportunities to re-image their relationship to teaching and learning; unlimited opportunities to become hungry and thirsty for knowledge.

Stage 3-Academic Immersion & Synthesis: School is in session from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. with total immersion in academic subjects. Educational assistants partner with the teacher to cross cultural divisions. Clinics in music, art, science and health provide expanded spaces for psychological healing. Teachers and classroom observers note that MMA offers a different learning paradigm: "It is a way of sharing that promotes self-discovery and self trust; a way of teaching the child so the child is able to re-enter the classroom and make a contribution. Most of the kids who come are very bright so it's not a matter of intelligence. It's a matter of meshing with the classroom environment. It's a matter of creating an environment where students are open to learning, and they then take that skill back to the classroom" – Dr. Maxine Mimms.

To provide synthesis and integration of learning, we have daily debriefings with children, teachers, educational leaders and parents. We provide a safe place for the expression of daily feelings, positive results, fears, experience and the integration of truth and experience with perception. Facilitators skilled in allowing criticism as well as positive feedback lead this daily process. At the end of the suspension, the home school participants are invited into the conversation to complete the return to the original classroom. The goal: internalizing that no one is guilty and no one is guiltless; we are all good, and we are all right. We cannot blame the victim, and the victim must be able to be victorious.

Stage Four-Re-entry and Follow Up

The student, counselor, parent, teacher and MMA convene to discuss the situation resulting in the suspension or expulsion, and determine whether the student and teacher can move forward in the educational process. All discuss the work that's been done and seek a meeting of the minds to go forward as teacher and student. As a result of this joint work, the student may return to the same school; we help the student find another school; or we bring them back to MMA for future determination.

When students return to school, the MMA model includes follow up with schools, students and parents about academic performance, behavior and relationships.

This year [2007] MMA and Tacoma Public Schools made an agreement that our students can retrieve credit for attending MMA when they return to school. This is a major achievement. The school system will refer students to MMA and now there is credit retrieval too. This is a long way from where we began. ---Mr. Robert Penton, Former Executive Director

The Current Curriculum

ACADEMIC YEAR	CONTENT	METHODOLOGY	WHAT WE LEARNED
2004-2005	MMA followed the Standard Tacoma School Curriculum	Didactic teaching, unconditional acceptance, positive recognition and reflective inquiry	We needed more support to help the children, such as mentors, and more support from the School System
2005-2006	MMA followed the Standard School Curriculum	Incorporated Summer Program with excursions into Community and self efficacy approaches	To help the child we must have the advocacy component and other intervention support for the family and parents
2006-2007	Increased Health and Science content and summer excursions and experiential activities to reduce isolation and increase positive choices	We incorporated the community into MMA by using parent/teacher assistants, extending the learning/teaching in Science and Health Fairs; partnerships for behavioral treatment & parent advocacy	The children have so much isolation that they need substantial exposure to alternatives and possibilities beyond their current existence.
2007-2008	Advanced Learning with College Demonstration Project, Evergreen State College; Mathematics & Mental Models	Self discovery, natural role models, finding the genius in each student, truth and reconciliation in every stage of the Education component and every MMA component; added 3 new partners.	The most important aspect of the curriculum is self discovery: learning to know and learning how to learn, finding the indigenous genius in every child.



Maxine Mimms Academy

Community Based - Community Focused



MMA CUSTOMERS SERVED OCTOBER 2004 THROUGH NOVEMBER 2007

Sources From Oct 2004 Jun 2005		Sources From Jan-Oct '06		Sources From Jan- Nov '07	
Maxine Mimms Academy Students	112 Students	Maxine Mimms Academy Students	122 Students	MMA Students	138 Students
Oasis of Hope Youth Program	200	Oasis of Hope Youth Program	279	Oasis of Hope Youth Program	300
Federal Way School District	300	Federal Way School District	389	Federal Way School District	400
Roving University	0	Roving University	0	Roving University	100
Family Services Adults/Children/ Middle And High School Students	200	Family Services Adults/Children / Middle And High School Students	236	Family Services Adults/Children/ Middle and High School	200

This vision has been ordained by God and it is greatly needed in the community. When I am here, I know I am doing something positive to help the children who need so much.

Dr. Ruth Kelly, Director of Family Services

C. COMPETITIVE PERSPECTIVE: OTHER PROVIDERS

The search for information on providers of services for students who have been “suspended and expelled” results in limited information. On the whole, we find that there are other providers of educational services to this population, and that the scope of services offered is different.

The Maxine Mimms Academies is a comprehensive approach for providing educational services to the growing ethnically disproportionate population of suspended and expelled youth. It is a twelve month day time educational service program with re-entry advocacy that returns students back to public school. The academy focus is not only the suspended and expelled student, but the suspended and expelled family. Although there are tutoring programs and community services programs offered to the suspended and expelled youth in the country, there are few that address the needs of children and their families.

Here are a few examples of programs we have discovered:

- ❖ **Pathway Program in Georgia.** The program has the purposes of providing structure and supervision to referred youth that are suspended or expelled from Augusta County, Staunton or Waynesboro City Schools; and to increase the success of and reduce negative behavior in participants upon their return to school.
- ❖ **Contra Costa County, California, Office of Education.** In this situation, the Office of Education actually provides alternatives for expelled youth so that they can continue to receive the benefit of public educational services. These services include and are not limited to: independent contract study, going to a special program offered at other charter schools who serve suspended and expelled youth; home schooling; rehabilitation and counseling services; procedures for re-admission.
- ❖ **As far back as 1996 there were innovative programs serving the expelled population, including the following:** City-as-School Program, Buffalo New York; Community Academy, Boston Massachusetts; and Borough Academies, New York, New York. [Creating Safe and Drug Free Schools – Action Guide, 1996.]

Creating Safe and Drug Free Schools: An Action Guide, September 1996 reports that alternative programs for serving expelled youth have the following components in common:

1. Lower student to staff ratio
2. Strong and stable leadership
3. Highly trained and carefully selected staff
4. A vision and set of objectives for the program that are shared by all staff and integrated into how staff and administrators interact with the program
5. District wide support of programs
6. Innovative presentation of instructional materials with an emphasis on real life learning
7. Working relations with all parts of the school system and with other collaborating agencies that provide critical services to youth
8. Linkages between schools and workplaces
9. Intensive counseling and monitoring

MMA is still working to establish some of these strengths, such as staffing, and has other strengths not listed here, such as its Family Services Component, which includes parental advocacy education, the Mentoring Component and our new Advanced Learning Initiative with Evergreen State College.

The Cost of Providing Services for Suspended and Expelled Youth:

One reservation about providing services to expelled youth has been the cost, according to Creating a Safe and Drug Free Environment. Their research says, however, that “data shows it is less costly to address the problem behavior and its underlying causes as quickly as possible rather than to wait until the student becomes involved with the criminal justice or welfare systems later in life. The American Federation of Teachers has estimated that “for the [\$1750] additional dollars spent on each [disruptive] student attending an alternative school, the public annually gains \$14,000 in student learning time that would have been lost, \$2800 in reduced grade repetition costs, \$1750 in reduced welfare costs, and \$1500 in reduced prison costs.” [From “Tiny Knife Sets Off Big Debate over Right to Attend School.” Education Daily 28, August 8, 2005 [166]: 1-3]

MMA is not an alternative school, however, and the money that public schools receive based on Average Daily Attendance does not follow the child when he or she comes to MMA as a suspended or expelled student. Our approach clearly goes beyond the boundaries of serving the individual student. MMA addresses the family also as part of assisting the students in the short term and making a positive impact in the long term on the likelihood of the student returning to school, improving performance, and successfully completing school.

MMA's programs are 12 months. The academic year, however, includes nine of these twelve months of operation. The Inner City Excursion Program [ICE] runs from June through August, and is an important part of breaking through student isolation and assisting them in learning about their community, while their community also learns about them.

Students who are suspended have a return date for the public schools, while those who are expelled do not. For both categories of students, we have an extended set of services going beyond the academic component so that we can offer both prevention and intervention. Helping the youth without providing support to the families does not result in helping students succeed consistently.

Our costs represent a positive investment in these youth without the current support of funds that the public school system receives on their behalf. See the daily, weekly, monthly and annual costs below:

Daily	\$ 59 per day
Weekly	\$ 323 per week
Monthly	\$ 1295 per month
Annually	\$ 15,540 per year

Consider the costs of prison, the unspoken costs of crime itself, the pipeline that has been born from cradle to prison for so many of our youth, and the fact that suspension and expulsion are a key part of that pipeline, normally leading to dropouts and then crime. It is far better to invest in breaking through this chain than to allow it to continue.

D. TOTAL ADMINISTRATION & TOTAL OPERATIONS PROGRESSIONS

1. TOTAL ADMINISTRATION PROGRESSION [TAP]

CENTRAL CONTROL

Maxine Mimms Academies is committed to service and developing/using best practices. The MMA Administration Office is the central control for all Academy inquiries, correspondences. There are four service areas of administration. Central Control directs the flow of administration and operation for clients to access MMA services through the following administrative process. Central Control is vital to the design and implementation of our transformative education model for students who are temporarily displaced from public education, their families and the community. Administrative support for MMA staff, parents, schools, and the community is given in any of the following service areas.

Referral/Appointment
Intake
Application
Initiation

FAMILY SERVICES. MMA Family Services is the first process for MMA clients to enter the Academy. The Director of Family Services will facilitate the intake of clients from referrals. An appointment will be scheduled the following week after student and guardian received orientation.

2. TOTAL OPERATIONS PROGRESSION [TOP]

Maxine Mimms Academies is committed to the standard of excellence in its internal operation. Management, staff, and volunteers are committed to providing the service of excellence through a process that is a standard for best practices. TOP will be the best practice model for the total operation of the Maxine Mimms Academies. Once students have successfully completed In-Take their immersion into the classroom begins.

INITIATION/ORIENTATION STAGES

Group Meeting 10:00 am – 11:00 am

- Middle and High school students will meet in an open setting to discuss their needs, goals, fears, problems before the commencement of academic immersion. Students and parents receive information of MMA programs, and guidelines. All MMA staff and partners are available to these families.

- Counselor, mentors for students participate to observe, and identify students that need more focused support.
 - David Duke, MA & M.F.T.: Foundation for Multicultural Solutions [FMS]
 - Dr. Dorothy Anderson - Tacoma Urban League

ACADEMIC IMMERSION – MMA/Evergreen State College

MMA and Evergreen State College, Tacoma Campus (TESC) are partners a Lyceum. MMA students will attend ESC Monday through Thursday for lecture on various topics for writing skills that allows for suspended and expelled students in the I-5 corridor of the Pacific Northwest to listen to academic lectures and participate in seminars that will increase their language arts, math understanding. This partnership will demonstrate the need to reduce intellectual isolation in our communities that has contributed to inability to pass the WASL. This is a demonstration between a State college and a community based academic institution, MMA.

- Evergreen State College Lyceum 10:00 am – 12 noon
Lunch 12:00 pm – 12:30 pm
- Personal Student Learning Plan 12:00 noon
 - Academic Component
 - Online Math – Saxon Text
 - Homework Assignments
 - English
 - Health/Science
 - Science
 - Computer Fundamentals
 - Music/ Art
 -
 - Behavioral Component 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm
 - Conflict Resolution
 - Cultural Competency
 - Mentoring
 - Gang Intervention
 - Counseling
 - Tacoma Urban League

After School Tutoring: 4:00 pm – 8:30 pm

E. STAKEHOLDER VIEWS OF MMA-2007

EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES	EXTERNAL THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many funding opportunities for strong partnerships to make a sustainable difference in community • Evergreen faculty members are professional educators; will help with curriculum development when the time comes. • Lack of professional development and systemic intervention in schools for temporarily displaced students • Some foundations recognize the need to finance capacity building • Crisis of African American males coming to national attention and state attention in Washington • In the Evergreen Project students see they have the opportunity for higher education. When they are back in school, they will perhaps select courses that challenge rather than bore them. • To get the right type of counseling for these students once they are back in public school. • Parents learn that “one size doesn’t fit all” and we learn to treat our children more as individuals. • Prevention: Engage the community in what MMA is doing; help parents learn behavior modification with children and change parents’ language with children before they become suspended or expelled • Now that youth feel safe at MMA, consider keeping them safe and not returning them to public schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a war on children, unwittingly waged by those hired to help, serve and protect: school systems, criminal justice, social services • Tendency of funders to value low costs per student • Money does not follow the child • Teachers who’ve made up their mind that students are “trouble”; the culture of the school system itself, demonstrated in teachers’ and administrators’ habits • Lack of public education and awareness about MMA, how it works and why. If MMA doesn’t address this, it is just a good system. • Disconnections between how general society’s systems work and how MMA works. • Suspended and expelled students haven’t been provided the right type of counseling. A lot of our kids’ needs are not being met in the schools. This means that the schools would have to do work and take the time to really change if the MMA model is right. • To sustain itself in this environment, MMA has to keep redefining and re-visioning itself, projecting itself into the future. It has to have the sheer will to do it. • Right now, the Tacoma community doesn’t know that it needs Maxine Mimms Academies

INTERNAL STRENGTHS	INTERNAL WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team spirit of staff and commitment to the vision is great • Improved equity of salaries helped with staff morale • New Board members bring more skills • Welcoming, spiritual and hardworking aspects of MMA's culture – value the genius in each person; turn no one away • Good equipment and technology • Clarity about operations components • Volunteerism of parents and community members • Visionary leadership of Maxine Mimms; she is the great originator, getting this academy up and going. • Relationships and contacts for potential funding/fund development • High costs/investment per student • Dr. Mimms has a wealth of abilities in solving problems and solving them at a different level than they were created. • She sticks with what she knows and has the courage to stick it out • I'm glad MMA is here. It's a safe place for the children to be. • The children enjoy and look forward to coming to school here. • Our [parental] relationship has improved since my children have been here. • All the services you [MMA] offer, like gang intervention, drug treatment, counseling, along with the regular classes in one setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not having tracked results of students • All staff don't use technology well for communications inside/outside • Lack of a shared data base • No measures yet for effectiveness • Inadequate space for operations • Lack of strategic plan – in progress • Insufficient funding; no fund development planning and staff • The Academy needs more in the way of infrastructure, teachers and counselors. Needs more focus on how it expects to maintain itself. • Operational plans not done well enough in advance-budget approvals • Board's limited role in the past • Tendency to hire staff without enough clarity about roles and expectations • More staff needed with specific skills to distribute work well among all staff • Crisis-orientation • High costs/investment per student • Staff selection: Dr. Mimms insists on using resources to make MMA a place for healing her employees who are supposed to be healing the clients. • Need more professional educators on staff to create the new curriculum. • It's hard to tell what the curriculum is: sometimes we as parents question, "Is this a real school?" • There is no evaluation system, no standard; but then, perhaps that is why it works. • Partners need more meetings with MMA about what's working/not working and to learn more about internal operations

F. Fall 2007 Report on Organizational Capacity Tool

September 29, 2007 – Fall Report, 2007

Dr. Darya Funches, REAP Unlimited

Overview

The Marguerite Casey Foundation has an organizational capacity tool that we can partially use to provide a “baseline” for MMA’s current capacity to achieve its mission and operate effectively. The tool is available online at www.margueritecasey.org or www.caseygrants.org. On September 29th the four Board members and MMA leadership team completed the self assessment tool and generated the results attached in this email package.

According to instructions, Board/Staff underestimated, rather than overestimated MMA’s capacity, resulting in assessments in all categories being two or below on a scale of one to four, where four is high capacity, and one is low capacity to perform.

The four categories of capacity that the tool measures are:

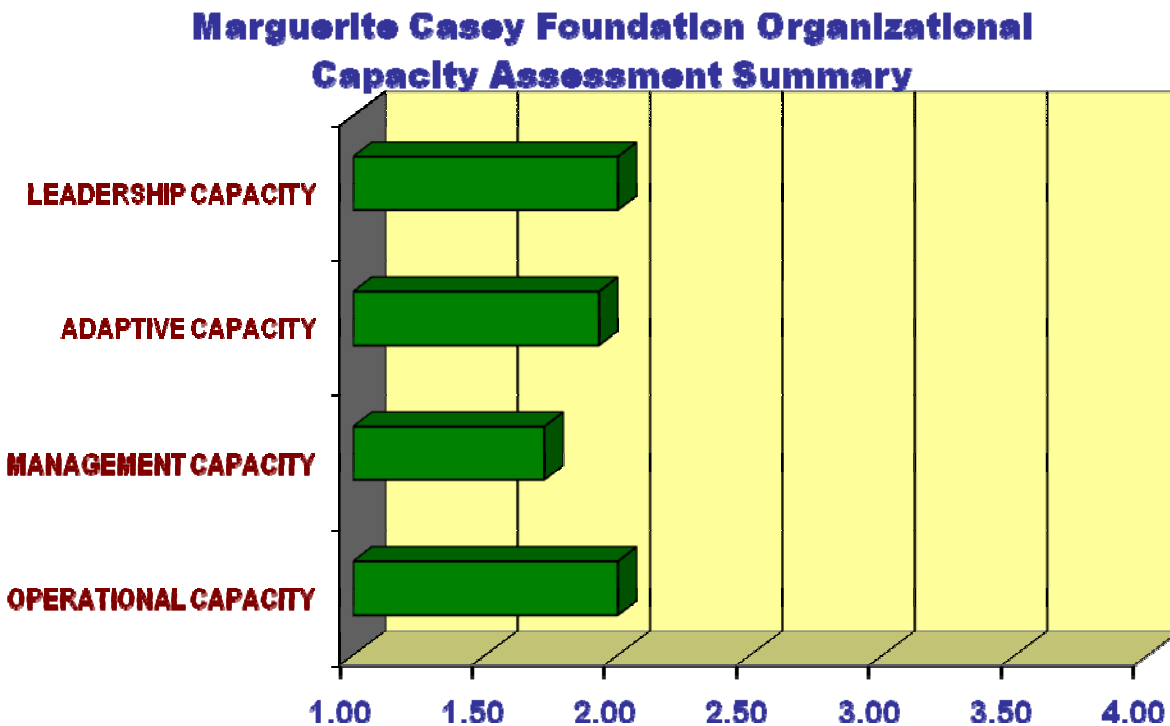
1. Leadership Capacity: the ability of MMA leaders to inspire, prioritize, make decisions, and innovate: **MMA Score=2.0**
2. Adaptive Capacity: the ability of MMA to monitor, assess, and respond to internal and external changes: **MMA Score=1.93**
3. Management Capacity: the ability of MMA to ensure effective and efficient use of organizational resources: **MMA Score=1.72**
4. Operational Capacity: the ability of MMA to implement key organizational and programmatic functions: **MMA Score=2.0**

Across all four categories, MMA selected four priorities for capacity building:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Item Rating</u>
Leadership:	Board Governance	Level One Rating
Adaptive Capacity:	Strategic Planning	Level Two Rating
Management Capacity:	Fund Development Planning	Level One Rating
Operational Capacity:	Staffing	Level Two Rating

The Gates Foundation award in December 2006 assists with the Strategic Planning priority, which we are in the midst of now. MMA intends to seek additional capacity building support from Gates Foundation and others over the next 3 years, including board development, fund development/fundraising, acquiring facilities, and staffing.

Figure One. Chart of MMA Scores-September 29, 2007



Leadership Capacity

MMA has the benefit of the leadership of Dr. Maxine Mimms, an inspirational leader who brings a strong history of innovation and influence in public education. MMA is her legacy project, and part of the impetus for capacity building is to make the Academy sustainable as the dominant leadership transfers from her to others. She intends to move from daily operations of Executive Director to an Emeritus Advisor during 2008.

The current Board has several new members and a new President from the “old board” making it essentially a new board, with a collection of strong resources, including the past President and other continuing members. MMA rates Board Governance as one of the top four priorities for Capacity Building.

A Level Four rating in Board Governance would be that the MMA Board:

“Provides strong direction, support and accountability to leadership and is engaged as a strategic resource; communication between board and leadership reflects mutual respect, appreciation for roles and responsibilities, shared commitment and valuing of collective wisdom.”

Currently, MMA rated itself as Level One in Board Governance, indicating that the Board:

“Provides little direction, support, and accountability to leadership; is not fully informed about material and other major organizational matters; is largely “feel good” support.”

Adaptive Capacity

MMA’s effectiveness depends partially on its ability to adapt to changes in its internal and external environments. As a small tightly working team, the staff must make constant adjustments to learning and other needs of the children, concerns of parents, new arrivals, complex family dynamics, and requests for information from funding sources, political issues and changes in the community--all of which require more capacity than is available.

In one sense MMA is highly adaptive, given leadership philosophies about operating organically and spontaneously. Networks built by MMA leadership also provide continuous environmental information. At the same time, MMA needs more systematic data on its performance and impact and more capacity to track such information in a timely way. Having such systematic information helps MMA to build a “best practices” approach and pursue grant funding more successfully. Tracking and documentation of results is essential.

Meanwhile, part of the MMA Model is to expose students to college through the partnership with Evergreen Tacoma Campus and to the broader world they live in through the Inner City Excursion program and broader excursions in the future. Building strong public/private partnerships is also a component of MMA’s approach, which will help it adapt well once these partnerships are strong and operating.

Note: The self assessment tool does not allow you to rate yourself as “in between” one and two or in between three and four. It forces you to select ratings of one, two, three, or four. Also, instructions are to “underestimate,” rather than “overestimate” the organization’s capabilities.

The Casey tool we used for self assessment has the premise that Strategic Planning will help an organization's adaptive capacity because it sets a destination, course to reach that destination, and priorities for a 3 year period. In Strategic Planning, MMA also considers contingencies of what to do if its original strategies and tactics don't work out and if the world changes in ways not expected in the planning process. The notion is that the amount of time and resources MMA uses in making these plans will save substantial time in the midst of operations and reduce the necessity of operating in crisis mode.

Last but not least, MMA wants to procure multi-year funding. Understandably, most major foundations are interested in providing multi-year funding when an organization has a strategic plan and results/impact data and measures. A foundation wants assurance that the grantee is making itself into a sound investment.

From the perspective of funders, then, getting results data now is a top priority. This can be done either through outside resources with more funding, or through innovative approaches faculty and administration can adopt by exploring techniques used by others as part of day to day operations. I've looked into this and have been referred to the following site for more informal approaches to getting this type of information: www.nwea.org/system.asp. I am recommending this information source as a means of getting to "best practices" and more funding prior to being able to pay for an official evaluation.

A Level Four rating in Strategic Planning means that MMA:

Has the ability to develop and refine a concrete, realistic, and detailed strategic plan; critical mass of internal expertise in strategic planning, or efficient use of external, sustainable, highly qualified resources; strategic planning exercise carried out regularly; strategic plan used extensively to guide management decisions.

A Level Two rating in Strategic Planning for MMA shows:

Some ability and tendency to develop high level strategic plan either internally or via external assistance; strategic plan sometimes directs management decisions.

The level two rating in this area is being addressed NOW, since we are in the midst of developing the strategic plan for MMA, using an outside consultant, internal staff and Board involvement.

Managerial Capacity

Along with the priority need selected by the Board/Staff group on September 29th, needs for improvement in human resources recruitment and planning, and financial planning surfaced.

MMA has begun to focus more on a variety of revenue sources such as fees for contractual services; individual contributions; grants and contracts for its new partnerships, beyond seeing single large grants as the primary source. The challenge is that there is not a fund development plan over a multiyear period. According to foundation sources I've spoken with, such a fund development plan makes little sense without a strategic plan. Again, most organizations want unrestricted funds and most funders want to fund specified projects.

MMA may have a goal: I want to raise \$1,000,000. The questions that come quickly are "toward what end" or "for what purpose?" The decisions MMA makes in the Strategic Planning and Capacity Building Planning processes should answer this question, rather than creating projects/programs as opportunities for funding arise. In Strategic Planning, the exploration we have actively done over the past year can be input into what is "fundable" along with being driven by direction from the compelling vision MMA creates in the Strategic Planning process.

Given the size of MMA, complexities of managing a larger organization do not apply. Still, getting the fund development area to a systematic operation is a priority for capacity building. I recommend staff for overall fund development planning and implementation, along with a grant writer, both of whom would be on staff. MMA can procure additional advice and consultation on an hourly basis. Hiring consultants who will develop proposals on a commission basis is not a consistent approach as it is based on contacts of the consultant or MMA driving the development process more than the vision and projects set forth in a strategic plan.

MMA has done well with the resources it has developed over the past four years as a young organization. To build multiyear funding, however, a different approach and more capacity are needed. In the Strategic Planning process and Capacity Building Planning process, MMA should prepare to offer a fund development plan that foundations and other funding sources will cover. Unfortunately, most foundations want a plan in order to provide funding. MMA wants funding to build a plan.

This means MMA needs to use some of its unrestricted funds for such activities or find more progressive corporations or coalitions of corporations to fund these aspects of capacity building.

A Level Four Rating in Fund Development Planning means that MMA has:

Well developed systems for long term planning, revenue diversification, and outlining and managing to target goals; multi-pronged fund development strategy is proactive and integrated into organization's long term strategic plan and budget projections.

The Level One rating MMA now has shows that MMA has:

No systems in place for long-term planning, diversifying revenue streams, or outlining and managing to target goals; fundraising is reactive; fund development strategy not well-articulated and focuses on one type of activity such as grants.

Operational Capacity

The operations at MMA have some strengths, such as the website, volunteers, and processes for accounting and program delivery. There are many areas for improvement, however, with the priority one being Staffing Levels. Again, substantial improvements are needed in data base development and management, new facilities, fundraising, board contributions and fundraising involvement, and marketing.

Since I began working with MMA almost a year ago, there are improvements in the phone system and phone answering, showing a consistent presence, warmth and responsiveness to all who may call or come by. This has been helped by having everyone in one building, although the size of the space is not yet sufficient. Previously, you had a consistent positive presence at the People's Center, but not a consistent presence at the administrative office, and the coordination between the two spaces was a challenge.

MMA did well on the Performance Audit conducted by CTED after completing the one year \$200,000 state awarded contract for the pilot project to develop a best practices model. The ultimate finding was that MMA was in compliance, and had several corrections to make to improve some aspects of operations.

Still, the staffing levels at MMA are a significant challenge. Each person is responsible for many diverse tasks without the capacity to focus well in a particular area and grow the organization as a result. For MMA to be sustainable and replicable, which is part of the “best practices” challenge, it needs to hire people who can do specific tasks well and develop programming to achieve the vision.

Ultimately, MMA speaks of going out of business, with no more need for its presence. Selecting the right people for the right positions is part of growing into the vision and putting itself out of business. Like many nonprofits, however, MMA falls to the temptation of hiring people who add to the organization’s capacity, but not necessarily in the priority areas intended. The impact of this approach is that people who have multiple skill sets needed have to do more work, and then are not necessarily able to meet all of the requirements of the many “jobs” or responsibilities for deliverables they have within MMA. Some people are over-utilized and others are underutilized in terms of what they can do. As MMA moves forward it needs to be accountable to hire more in accordance with specific skills needed to follow the strategic plan. Human resource planning and recruitment to match system needs, more than individual and interpersonal needs become critical.

If MMA eventually achieves a Level Four rating for Staffing, it means:

All positions within and peripheral to organization are adequately and appropriately staffed; attendance problems are extremely rare; turnover is limited, and vacancies filled immediately.

Currently MMA rated itself as Level One in Operational Capacity, meaning:

Some positions within and peripheral to the organization [staff, volunteers, board, senior management] are unified, inadequately filled, or experience high turnover and/or poor attendance.

Periodic Assessments

I recommend that MMA conduct this self assessment, using the same tool, every three months to six months, consistently over the next three years, tracking progressions and regressions and reporting accordingly.

Strategies for Capacity Building

Having the appropriate capacity required to implement the strategic plan is required. Otherwise, organizations tend to plan in accordance with what they can do and the limits of the mind rather than in alignment with their visions. For 2008 funding, Gates requires the Strategic Plan to be done and the Capacity Building Plan to be in progress. The latter may take more time because of the need for capital projects along with other aspects of capacity.

The gaps between current capacity and what is needed to implement the Strategic Initiatives will form the basis for defining capacity building goals and strategies.

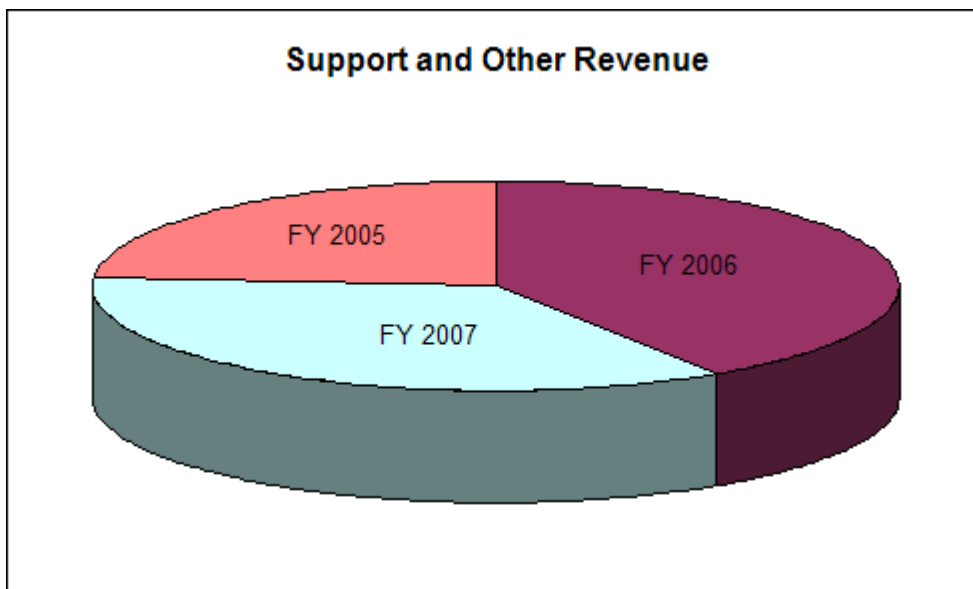
Resources for Capacity Building

1. For simple ways to do evaluation while teaching and doing daily operations: www.nwea.org/system.asp.
2. For consulting and training in transformation, healing and creating new realities for individuals, groups, organizations, communities: www.reapunlimited.com
3. For Fundraising, Marketing and Promotions: Board member sponsored events; voluntary expertise of select board members on MMA's new board; staff hired for specific expertise on salary and/or contract with base dollars in addition to commission. Like other organizations, MMA must be prepared to have a marketing and fundraising budget, including costs beyond the personnel for these functions.
4. Several foundations give grants for capacity building, realizing that it is important to build sustainable organizations. If we go to our favorite restaurant and only want to pay the price for the food and never pay for the advertising that helped us find it, or the cleaning of the facility, or for the record keeping that helps determine prices, or the training for new personnel – we would be less satisfied customers because the restaurant might disappear. And so it is with small nonprofit organizations. REAP Unlimited has worked with you to prepare a 3 year capacity building proposal. This was done, however, without the benefit of a strategic plan. In the next few weeks, it is time to revisit this proposal in light of the strategic plan and select the type of support necessary to realize the vision via the strategic initiatives.

G. MMA SOURCES OF INCOME 2005-2007

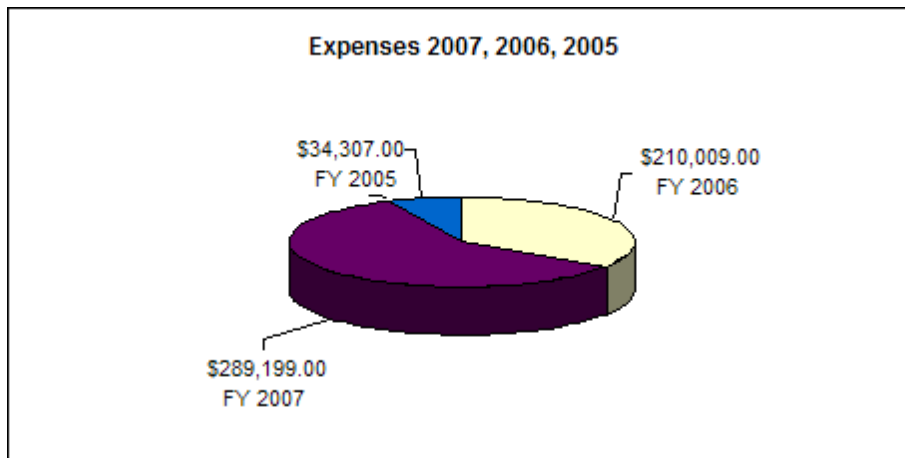
Source of Income						
Fiscal Year	FY 2007	%	FY 2006	%	FY 2005	%
Government	\$ 36,000.00	9%	\$199,200.00	57%		
Individuals	13,643.00	3%	35,262.80	10%	31,271.00	14%
Foundations	342,250.00	86%	111,050.00	32%		
Corporations	1,000.00	0%	2,000.00	1%		
Inkind					200,000.00	86%
Interest	939.00	0%				
Other	5,000.00	1%				
Program Fees						
Total	\$ 398,832.00	100%	\$347,512.80	100%	\$231,271.00	100%

Maxine Mimms Academies currently depends less on government funding than in years past. In 2006 WA State CTED invested in an MMA Suspended & Expelled Pilot. In 2005 MMA sustained operations with in-kind contributions.



H. MMA EXPENSES, 2005-2007

This chart reflects the agency's annual expenditures. Education and wraparound family services account for Maxine Mimms Academies program spending. The Maxine Mimms Academies is highly dependent on philanthropic giving.



EXPENSES	FY 2007	FY 2006	FY 2005
PROGRAM COSTS			
Education/Family Services	\$ 105,647.00	\$143,880.00	\$ 19,020.00
TOTAL PROGRAM COSTS	\$ 105,647.00	\$143,880.00	\$ 19,020.00
ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS			
Administration	\$ 61,340.00	\$145,319.00	\$ 15,287.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 166,987.00	\$289,199.00	\$ 34,307.00

PART FOUR. THE STRATEGIC RESPONSE & PLANNING CYCLE

- A. "WORKING AT THE ROOT:" A TRANSFORMATIONAL APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM**
- B. DESCRIPTIONS OF SEVEN STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**
- C. NEW MMA PLANNING CYCLE & QUARTERLY GRID -2007-2010**

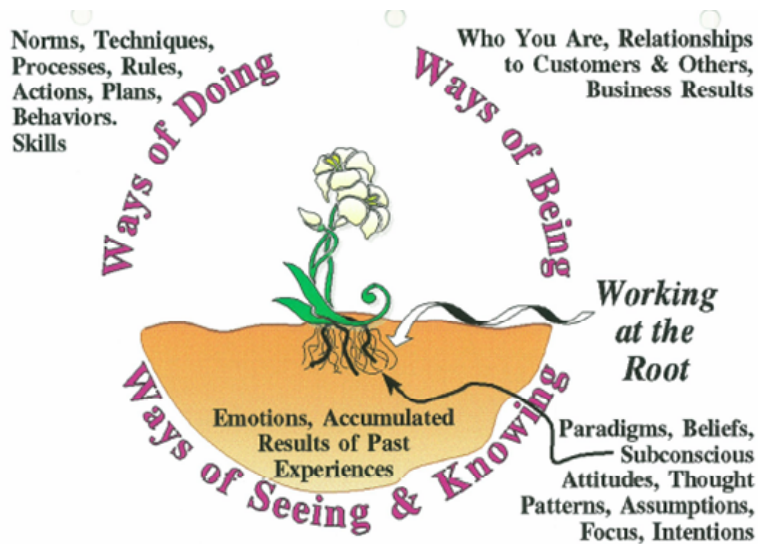
MMA provides a critical service with its unique "Triage" approach, designed to provide emergency treatment to the wounded children and their families. Treating the wounded is not enough to save the children, however. It is necessary to stop the bullets being fired that cause the wounding. This will be a real transformation for the youth, their families, the school system and community. Go beyond healing the wounds. Stop the bullets. This is creating a new reality. This is transformation.

—Dr. Darya Funches, REAP Unlimited

A. WORKING AT THE ROOT: A TRANSFORMATIONAL APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM

Working at the Root

Darya Funches, Ed.D.



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South African activist Stephen Biko said, “Change the way people think and things will never be the same.” Transformation occurs at the root of a situation, at the bedrock of our society and our selves, not merely upon the surfaces of who we are.

When we make changes on the surface, we are like people rearranging chairs on the deck of the Titanic in the midst of a state of emergency. To achieve MMA’s mission requires new ways of seeing, being and doing for MMA, public school systems, partners, parents, students and the community. We are on a journey together.

The seven strategic initiatives for MMA’s vision are designed to address root causes influencing the problem while catalyzing the vision into reality, and contribute addressing the needs throughout the country through development of a Best Practices Model.

B. DEFINING SEVEN STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

1. Capacity Building Initiative: Resources & Leadership: Fund development planning and implementation for programs, administration and capital projects; transformation interventions and training; and professional development for staff, partners, Board, management; Board and Staff Development training, consulting and coaching.
2. Advanced Learning Initiative: Demonstration project with Tacoma Evergreen State College and other relevant institutions to breakthrough isolation for students and encourage possibilities for positive academic and behavioral performance, using new models of cognitive maturity, learning, self discovery and synthesis.
3. Transform the Public School System Initiative: Go beyond treating wounds to stopping the wounding. Assist the public school system in becoming an environment that embraces the indigenous genius in every child. This calls for assessment and transformation of the school system, policies and practices, mindsets of educators, administrators, legislators; and parental advocacy. The money should follow
4. Best Practices Initiative: Develop and implement approaches for tracking progress and results of all programs, practices, and goals for all aspects of the MMA model/approach, including impact of collaborations, capturing and refining model components, and experiments with replicating the model.
5. Curriculum Initiative: Embrace the Indigenous Genius in Every Child: Develop the curriculum for students used by MMA and prepare it to be used by different public school systems and relevant others. The curriculum helps faculty see and reach the indigenous nature of each child, rather than using the prescriptive approach used in most Western civilization.
6. Informed & Healthy Youth and Families Initiative: Improve health and advocacy of parents, students and entire families, providing a sounder base for students to perform well and succeed in public education. Includes prevention and intervention for students & families, financial health, and community education that will help embrace the indigenous genius in every child, including those re-entering from criminal justice system.
7. The Village is a Teacher Initiative: Community education and development, creating a movement where the community takes responsibility for integrating and supporting these youth and children, including businesses, governments, and private nonprofit organizations and coalitions. We restore rituals into the community to help youth connect to their indigenous natures. It takes a healthy village to educate a healthy child.

“Schools like MMA and First Place should receive the public education dollars to educate these children. The dollars should follow the child. A coalition of schools like us should meet with the legislators and take leadership on the money following the children.” Dr. Doreen Cato, First Place School of Seattle

MMA has the opportunity to do prevention. Use Parents for Student Success or another approach to engage the community in what MMA is doing; help parents learn behavior modification with children and change parents’ language with children before they become suspended or expelled. --Ms. Dawn Mason, Parents for Student Success

C. A SEASONAL PLANNING CYCLE AND QUARTERLY GRID

- ❖ MMA has operated on a calendar fiscal year, given the variety of its activities and funding sources
- ❖ Current and potential funding sources are state and federal governments, which have July thru June fiscal year, and major foundations, which have varying fiscal years.
- ❖ The application, decision making, funding and reporting cycles of funding sources are complex, making it difficult for MMA to have seasons purely for planning, revenue generation, and implementation.
- ❖ For most major funding sources [\$200,000 and above] planning and procurement activities need to be considered a year in advance.
- ❖ With the primary customer base of school systems, students and their families, program planning, funding and operations may be facilitated by using an academic year as the fiscal year which begins in September and ends in August. An example of how the strategic and operational planning and budgeting would occur is on the following table is a grid of the planning process, starting with 2006 events that led up to the official strategic planning process in the fall of 2007.
- ❖ Using such a process as the one on the following grid will help MMA get “ahead of the wave” of opportunities in its decision making.
- ❖ Along with more shared clarity of vision, this planning cycle will place MMA ahead of the wave of opportunities, which facilitates achieving visionary results.
- ❖ Using transformational and reality construction tools of REAP, the vision and strategic plan become attractors of the right opportunities, and guides for direction. All of MMA, including the Board, become barometers for sensing truth and right action.

Dr. Darya Funches, REAP Unlimited Consulting

GRID OF THE MMA PLANNING CYCLE BY QUARTER--D. FUNCHES, REAP UNLIMITED

Quarters of the Cycle	Academic 2006-2007	Academic 2007-2008	Academic 2008-2009	Academic 2009-2010
September thru November: Track/Document Quarter Results by December 20 for this Q	-Gates required MMA to do SP/CB to be a grantee for operational funding -REAP wrote the first SPCB 3 year proposal -Gates granted an award for Dec 2006 thru Feb 2008: \$80k for operations; up to \$50k for SPCB	--Official kickoff of SP & CB Planning -Prepare Transitional Budget for Dec. 2007 thru Aug. 2008 by 11/20/07 -Prepare Budget for Sep. 2008 thru Aug. 2009 by 11/20/2007 -Launch initiatives w/ new partners; Seek collaborative 3 yr funding	-Implement 2008-09 Initiatives in Operations & Capacity Bldg -Monitor results, learning and adjust -Prepare Budget for Sep.2009 thru Aug 2010 by 10/20/2008; Board approval by 10/30/07 New Executive Director? By Sept. 08	-Implement 2009-2010 Initiatives in Operations & Capacity Bldg. -Monitor results, learning, & adjust -Prepare budget for Sep. 2010 through 2011 by 10/1/2009; Board approval by 10/30/07
December thru February: Track/Document Quarter Results by March 20 for this Q	MMA sought repeat funding from CTED & others	-Complete Capacity Building Plan by 12/10/07 -Implement Winter 2007-2008 Initiatives	Implement Winter 2008/9 Initiatives in Operations & Capacity Bldg.	Implement Winter 2009/2010 Initiatives in Operations & Capacity Bldg.
March thru May: Track/Document Quarter Results by June 20 for this Q	-Won Oprah Foundation \$250k award -Developed and sent RFP for SPCB -Sought Summer Funding	-Implement Spring 2008 Initiatives in Operations & Capacity Bldg. -Monitor results, adjust 2007-08 Plans	-Implement Spring 2009 Initiatives in Operations & Capacity Bldg. - Monitor adjust 2008-09 Plans	-Implement Spring 2010 Initiatives in Operations & Capacity Bldg. -Monitor progress, make adjustments in 09-10 Plans
June thru August: Track/Document Quarter Results by September 20 for this Q	-Identified new partners - Formed College Experiment -Selected SPCB Consultant -Procured First Place award -Science Fairs	-Implement Summer Initiatives -Evaluate 2007-2008 Initiatives & Synthesize Learning -Update Strategic Plan & Cap. Bldg Plan	-Implement Summer Initiatives -Evaluate 08-09 Initiatives & Synthesize Learning -Prepare Strategic Plan for 2010-2013 by 8/31/09	-Implement Summer Initiatives in Operations & Capacity Bldg. -Evaluate 09-2010 -Disseminate and Replicate Best Practices

PART FIVE. STRATEGIC PROFILE FOR EACH INITIATIVE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, MEASURES, WORK PLANS

- A. STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #1: CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE
- B. STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #2: ADVANCED LEARNING INITIATIVE
- C. STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #3: TRANSFORM SCHOOL SYSTEM INITIATIVE
- D. STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #4: BEST PRACTICES INITIATIVE
- E. STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #5: EMBRACE THE INDIGENOUS GENIUS IN EVERY CHILD CURRICULUM INITIATIVE
- F. STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #6: INFORMED & HEALTHY FAMILIES INITIATIVE
- G. STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #7: VILLAGE AS TEACHER INITIATIVE

INITIATIVE #1: CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE

1. Capacity Building Initiative: Resources & Leadership

Fund development planning and execution, marketing, promotions and fundraising activities; administrative infrastructure and capital projects; transformation interventions and professional development for staff, Board, management, faculty and selected partners; ongoing consultations to management/staff and coaching.

Goal Statement: Generation of human, financial and capital resources and capabilities that are critical to fulfill the mission and realize the vision between 2007 and 2012 and desired outcomes established for 2007-2010.

Linkage to Overall Outcomes: Able to recruit, develop and retain essential staff, Board members, management, faculty and selected partners; improved academic performance through the delivery of curricula tailored to the needs of temporarily displaced students; automated tools to support, track and monitor student achievement; and reduce the number of juveniles entering the criminal justice system in Pierce County.

Objectives

Objective 1: Procure ongoing capacity for fund development planning and implementation: including recruiting/hiring a Fund Development Director and a Grant Writer by 6/30/08

Objective 2: Develop and implement a capital campaign for a new facility to be in by 8/30/09.

Objective 3: Develop and implement staffing, recruitment and selection plan, including new Executive Director selection, Director of Finance and an Administrative Assistant

Objective 4: Develop Board as high-performing leadership and governance body with 2 – two day Board Intensives per year, 2007-2008; 2008-2009.

Objective 5: Develop and implement specifications for a web-based tracking, monitoring and reporting system

Objective 6. “Heal the Wounded Healer”: Staff/Leadership Development & Transformation sessions to shift old patterns/create new performance; 2 individual intensives per year per staff; 2 group intensives per year to create high performing patterns for MMA as an overall system, including team adjustments in Strategic Plan.

Objective 7. Design/implement Leadership/Transformation Series to build MMA Partners’ Capacity to develop as high performing leaders and transformers in executing MMA Vision

Objective 8. Design/conduct brief seasonal assessments for staff and overall organization regarding capacity and overall performance; Winter and Summer 2008, 2009, 2010.

Key Internal Leader: Mr. Michael Twiggs
Key Board Leader: Mr. Stephen P. Smith
Key External Resource: Dr. Darya Funches, REAP Unlimited

Linkages to Other Initiatives:

1. Curriculum Initiative
2. Best Practices Initiative
3. Transform School System Initiative
4. Village as Teacher Initiative

INITIATIVE #2: ADVANCED LEARNING INITIATIVE

Description: Demonstration project with Tacoma Evergreen State College and other relevant institutions to break through isolation for students, affirming that the mind is transformed through the experience of and maps of cognitive maturity.

Goal Statement: Increased student achievement through the introduction of new models for learning, cultivating natural role models, improved modes of student behavior, student/teacher communications, and self discovery.

Linkage to Overall Outcomes: Discoveries about self and new environment lead to more possibilities for learning and growth. They are exposed to a high performing learning environment typically accessible to gifted and talented or honors students. For students who participate at least 3 months, this initiative should contribute to dropout prevention/high school completion and improved performance in the public school.

Objectives for Initiative #2

1. **Objective #1.** Increased academic performance of students who participate for at least 3 months in the Advanced Learning Initiative.
2. **Objective #2.** Development of natural young role models for students from the college student population.
3. **Objective #3.** Increased ability of students' abilities to learn how to learn
4. **Objective #4.** Increased student retention in public school until graduation
5. **Objective #5.** MMA alumni go on to enter college or vocational school at a greater rate than those in the general suspended/expelled population in Pierce County.

Key Internal Leader: Dr. Maxine Mimms /
Ms. Isa Nichols

Key Board Leader: Mr. Keith James

Key External Resource: N/A

Key Partner/s: Dr. Artee Young, Director of
The Evergreen State College @ Tacoma

Linkages to Other Initiatives:

1. Best Practices Initiative: Document models of learning and teaching that work best with this population
2. Capacity Building: Transform MMA faculty/faculty to work with progressive environment with students & university.
3. Curriculum Initiative: Capture aspects of curriculum to include in the "Embrace the Indigenous Genius in Every Child" Curriculum

INITIATIVE # 3: TRANSFORM THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM INITIATIVE

Description: This initiative impacts the public school system, assisting it to become an environment that embraces the indigenous genius in all children. This calls for assessing the system regarding this population, relevant policies and practices, mindset of educators and public educational administrators, providing professional development support for all regarding this population of students and parent advocacy.

Goal Statement: A public school system with the culture, mindset, practices, tools, skills and abilities to embrace the indigenous genius in every child.

Linkage to Overall Outcomes: By stopping the bullets inadvertently fired by the school system and policies/practices, we go beyond treating the wounded, resulting in children succeeding in public school, completing their education, and making choices that break the chain in the cradle to prison pipeline. Tacoma Public School System is MMA's laboratory for achieving this goal.

Objective #1. Establish an agreement with Tacoma Public Schools and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction for this Initiative, acknowledging MMA's role in convening the assistance for this work.

Objective #2. Design/Conduct assessment of school system culture, policies, practices, mindsets and methodologies, impacting abilities to educate all children successfully and embrace the indigenous genius in every child and make recommendations.

Objective #3. Establish a Collaboratorium for this Initiative of political, business, governmental, educational, and religious/spiritual leaders, students and parents to transform the school system regarding the suspended/expelled population.

Objective #4. Design and deliver services to make the transformation: including leadership and faculty transformation per school and overall school system administrators.

Objective # 5. Develop, design and conduct a training institute for teachers and parents to learn how to educate the indigenous genius in every child; and how to work with the suspended and expelled population.

Objective #6. Achieve financial equity for suspended/ expelled students: money from the public school system following the child by June 30, 2008.

Key Internal Leader: Dr. Maxine Mimms
Key Board Leader: Mr. Rob Reider
Lead External Resource: Dr. Darya Funches, REAP Unlimited
Key Partner/s: Parents for Student Success, Building Bridges, Multi-Centric Institute, Puget Sound Educational Services District

Linkages to Other Initiatives:

- 1.Capacity Building
- 2.Best Practices Initiative: Combining MMA, REAP & PFSS can be useful for other programs
- 3.Curriculum Initiative
- 4.Village as Teacher Initiative

INITIATIVE #4. BEST PRACTICES INITIATIVE

Description: Develop and implement approaches for tracking progress and results of all programs, practices and goals for all aspects of the MMA model/approach, including impact of collaborations, capturing and refining model components, and experiments with replicating the model.

Goal Statement: The development of tools and technologies to support the delivery of essential learning; automated student tracking and reporting; and access to accurate and timely information.

Linkage to Overall Outcomes: Temporarily displaced children will be returned to the public school system; reduce daytime crime; youth will stop entering the criminal justice system.

Objectives for Initiative 4:

Objective #1. Research other programs serving the same population and their practices.

Objective #2. Develop a written description of MMA's model/approach by August 2008

Objective #3. Successful replication of the model in 3 to 5 locations by August 2010

Objective #4. Develop and implement staffing plan for replication and expansion by August 2009

Objective #5. Design & conduct Washington State and National Collaboratoriums for alternative programs serving suspended and expelled population by August 2009

Key Internal Leader: Ms. Isa Nichols

Key Board Leader: T.B.A.

Key External Resource: T.B.A.

Key Partner/s: T.B.A.

Linkages to Other Initiative:

1. Capacity Building Initiative
2. Advanced Learning Initiative
3. Curriculum Initiative

INITIATIVE #5: “Embrace the Indigenous Genius in Every Child” Curriculum

Description: Develop the curriculum for students used by MMA and prepare it to be used by the Tacoma School Systems and relevant others. The initiative teaches faculty to see the value in each child from his/her indigenous nature, rather than from the prescriptive nature we usually use in Western civilization and alters aspects of the system that preclude students from receiving the basic human right of public education.

Goal Statement: An educational structure, content set and methodologies that provide a holistic approach to seeing the value in each child while providing essential knowledge, skills and abilities for learning about learning and knowing about knowing.

Linkage to Overall Outcomes: Ensure a safe place and space for this population to discover self as the root to becoming successful lifelong learners and public school students, completing their public education, and making positive contributions to society, rather than engaging in daytime crime.

Objectives:

Objective #1. Recruit and hire a Director of Education @ MMA by June 30, 2008

Objective #2. Develop and present alternative mental models that result in students learning how to learn, including increased academic performance, improved behavior at school, and engaged participation in the learning process.

Objective #3. Expand excursions to explore and appreciate different cultures.

Objective #4. Design and implement an urban distance learning online component.

Objective #5. Design and implement rewards from the Village, such as an “Ordinary Genius Day Festival” each year to honor achieving youth and their families as part of a new reward system by December 30, 2008

Objective #6. Develop and document the “Embrace the Indigenous Genius in Every Child” Curriculum.

Objective #7. Procure full credit retrieval from the Tacoma School System for expelled students by March, 2008.

Key Internal Leader: Dr. Maxine Mimms
Key Board Leader: Mr. Stephen Smith
Key External Resource: Mr. Marcus Maceo
Key Partner/s: First Place School, Parents for Student Success; Evergreen State College.

Linkages to Other Initiatives:

1. Transform the School System
2. Advanced Learning Initiative
3. Best Practices
4. Village as Teacher

INITIATIVE #6: INFORMED AND HEALTHY YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Description: Provide a range of family services in health awareness and intervention and parental/ community education that will support student success in public education.

Goal Statement: Education, prevention and intervention for youth, families and the community [The Village] in order to create students' success in public school, where they make more positive interruptions in school and society than negative interruptions, developing their leadership abilities in life.

Linkage to Overall Outcomes: It takes a healthy, educated village to raise a healthy, educated child. Children achieve better in school and make positive choices

Objectives:

Objective 1. Recruit and hire a Behavioral Specialist for design and implementation of treatment services for families and youth.

Objective 2. Design and conduct 4 seasonal Health Fairs each year to promote health awareness and education [2007-2008; 2008-2009; 2009-2010]; Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall each year.

Objective 3. Design and conduct 4 seasonal workshops for Parents' Advocacy each year to educate parents in how to advocate for their children's success in public schools.

Objective 4. Design and conduct 4 seasonal workshops for Financial Health for parents and the community each year to improve awareness, understanding and skills about personal/family finances.

Objective 5. Design, develop, promote and sell a directory of community services and resources for health, education and welfare of the community.

Key Internal Leader: Dr. Theodore Mimms

Key Board Leader: Ms. Virginia Hankins

Key External Resource: N/A

Key Partner/s: Parents for Student Success; Foundation for Multicultural Solutions, Tacoma Urban League, University of Washington School of Social Work; UW School of Social Work

Linkages to Other Initiatives:

1. Capacity Building Initiative re/ fundraising, marketing and promotions
2. Curriculum Initiative re/ content and methods for youth and family health
3. Village as Teacher Initiative re/ community involvement.

INITIATIVE #7: THE VILLAGE AS TEACHER

Description: Community education, development, and mobilization, creating a movement where the community takes responsibility for integrating, supporting and educating these youth: establishing partnerships with public and private interests. The improvements we make with students and families become sustainable when the community itself takes responsibility for those most challenged, such as suspended/expelled youth and their families. Breaking through the isolation brings healing and positive contributions for all involved. This involves re-introducing rituals as a means of restoring the village and activating the overall MMA vision. The village educates the children through rituals, such as storytelling events and rites of passage ceremonies.

Goal Statement: A restored collaborative community that nurtures, guides, educates and supports every child.

Linkage to Overall Outcome Measures: Students complete their middle and high school educations, increase academic performance, positive behavior choices and cease or never begin participating in the juvenile justice system.

Objectives

Objective #1. Recruit and hire a Director of Mentorship for MMA by June 30, 2008

Objective #2. Design and establish an MMA Alumni Mentorship Program by July 2008

Objective #3. Establish a Collaboratorium to champion this initiative, including public/private interests, different cultures, ethnicities and faiths.

Objective #4. Establish and implement “Village Awards Days” each year to honor the achievements of students and families.

Objective #5. Expand Inner City Excursions programs to explore and learn about Neighbors Beyond the Village—outlying rural areas; and to include excursions for 12 months.

Key Internal Leader: Mr. Michael Twiggs /
Ms. Isa Nichols
Key Board Leader: TBA
Key External Resource:
Key Partner/s: Port of Tacoma, Tacoma-Pierce
County Chamber of Commerce, Ministerial
and Interfaith Alliances, State Farm Insurance,
The Money Tree

Linkages to Other Objectives

1. Capacity Building Initiative
2. Informed and Healthy Youth & Families
3. Best Practices Initiative
4. Curriculum Initiative

APPENDICES

- A. WORK PLANS, MEASURES AND INDICATORS**
- B. TRANSITIONAL BUDGET FOR JANUARY THROUGH AUGUST, 2008
& PROPOSED BUDGET FOR SEPTEMBER 2008 THROUGH AUGUST 2009**
- C. EXCERPTS FROM THE WINTER REPORT 2007**
- D. THE WINTER REPORT ADDENDUM, 2007**

SAMPLE INITIATIVE WORK PLAN

INITIATIVE #/NAME:					
LEADERS FOR INITIATIVE:					
Activities	Start Date	Finish Date	Persons Involved	Funds Needed	Deliverables
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					

SUCCESS MEASURES FOR OBJECTIVES

Initiative 1: Capacity Building-Leadership & Resource Development		
Goal Statement:		
Link to Outcome Measures:		
Objective #1:		
Measures for Year 1 September 2007 thru August 2008	Measures for Year 2 September 2008 thru August 2009	Measures for Year 3 September 2009 thru August 2010
Notes:		

Quarterly Progress Indicators-Year One: 2007-2008

Initiative #1:			
Goal:			
Objective #____:			
1 st Q	2 nd Q	3 rd Q	4 th Q

**CONTINGENCIES for STRATEGIC INITIATIVE
AND TRIGGERS TO EMPLOY CONTINGENCY**

Initiative Name_____

[Taking all objectives into account – To Be Developed by Key Leader and Key Board Member]

APPENDIX B. BUDGETS

Budgets will follow after the Board meeting and additional collaboration with partners.

APPENDIX C. EXCERPTS FROM THE WINTER 2007 REPORT

FINAL REPORT FOR

MAXINE MIMMS ACADEMIES' WINTER MANAGEMENT RETREAT,

JANUARY 2007

DARYA FUNCHES, ED.D.

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Table of Contents

- I. Overview
- II. Consultant's "Micro Assessment"
- III. Recommendations for Thought and Action
- IV. Tasks, Roles and Timetables for Implementation
- V. Next Steps
- VI. Examples of Staff Responses to Interview Questions
- VII. Select REAP Concepts and Materials

Note: The full Winter Report has the 7 sections above. This EXCERPTS document includes the first five sections, but not the last two. The EXCERPTS document was prepared for inclusion in the Appendices Section for Maxine Mimms Academies' Strategic Plan for 2007-2010.

I. Overview

This report summarizes comments from the Administrative staff of the Maxine Mimms Academy [MMA] from interviews conducted by the consultant in December 2006 and January 2007, and also includes a micro-assessment and recommendations from the Consultant. I conducted the interviews as part of coming on board to lead fund development after writing MMA's strategic planning/capacity building proposal to Gates in the fall. The matters raised during interviews led me to write this report as an in-kind contribution to MMA. As a result of the interviews, we may have a clearer shared understanding of some matters affecting fund development and sustainability at MMA, which have some bearing on what must be done for MMA to become a best practices model. I prepared this report for internal use only; not for distribution to other partners, colleagues and/or funding sources, except by agreement of the management team itself and REAP.

Those reading already know something of the needs at hand. If you want to rush to what I advise, I can tell you in a few brief words, while the detail and concepts follow in the subsequent pages. In short, the advice for MMA is advice I'd give to spiritual warriors in a midst of the heat of battle or ceremony: "Pray up, get up, brave up, smarten up, huddle up, staff up, show up, pay up, and follow up. If you're feeling castrated, get some duct tape. If you're feeling emotionally vulnerable, take some duck medicine, letting the water roll off your back. If you are feeling deserted, you can call on spiritual resources: Walk with the Lord or your Divine Source. Focus on the mission, set goals and check the reality against your intentions. MMA can generate revenue. MMA is an idea whose time has come, and it is time is to get ready. The test is to practice what you say you believe and know. . The test is to learn what we don't know and be open to learn it. We all are the test. We all are the testimony. We all are the tools.

II. Consultant's Micro Assessment

I consider this a micro assessment because it does not include interviews and observations of total operations, board and all staff. . The initial focus of the interviews was fund development, while the focus of the Winter Management Retreat is on an interim assessment of MMA's performance, preparing it for CTED's performance audit and other upcoming challenges and opportunities. Matters deeper than fund developed emerged in the interviews, leading me to make an in-kind contribution of this report, which goes beyond the boundaries of the deliverables for the Winter Management Retreat. We all appreciate that fund development is affected by and influences overall MMA performance. This micro assessment is based on the following:

- ❖ Interviews with and comments from management team members
- ❖ Consultant observations of team behavior and incidents
- ❖ Consultant interactions with team members over time
- ❖ Consultant's experience, concepts and spiritual guidance

This is not a comprehensive analysis. It is an in-depth look, giving MMA an opportunity to reflect and take action for improved health. My comments are influenced and supported by models and conceptual frameworks I've developed during 35 years of consulting to nonprofits, profit corporations, governmental organizations and their leaders.

In a few years, since its birth in 2004, MMA has gone from being a vision in the minds and hearts of Dr. Maxine Mimms and a circle of close friends and volunteering colleagues to become a 12 month operation in the Hilltop area of Tacoma with administrative staff, contractors, teachers and service delivery partners. MMA has been successful in activating a new vision for "suspended and expelled" students. It has:

- ❖ Created a referral relationship with Tacoma public schools, serving children and their families
- ❖ Initiated and operated a 12 month program, received funds and contributions from public and private sources over two years
- ❖ Developed partnerships to provide needed services
- ❖ Established a Board of Directors

It seems, however that MMA has activated this powerful vision without the infrastructure—systems, and processes—and leadership to perform its own creation and know its own performance. MMA offers a critical, needed and timely service for a special population of students. Specifically, MMA has been challenged with "symptoms," which provide opportunities to learn and make improvements.

Examples of such symptoms include:

- ❖ Not making fulfilling commitments to funding sources in a timely way
- ❖ Spending money at a rate faster than it has funds coming in
- ❖ Staying on top of available funds – writing checks for insufficient funds
- ❖ Tensions among the staff about equity of pay, performance expectations, and “crisis management”
- ❖ Lack of follow through on agreements and decision
- ❖ Questions about MMA’s accountability to funding sources
- ❖ Too much dependency on one major source of funding at a time
- ❖ Staff avoiding coming in as a way of managing stress/anxiety
- ❖ Pending legal suit and defamation of reputations of staff and the Academy
- ❖ Being “suspended and expelled” from committed funding programs
- ❖ Insufficient shared awareness and understanding among leadership of the details of operation and finances

We can discuss the micro-assessment in terms of eight major categories:

1. History, Origins, Vision and Purpose
2. Potential & Actual Clients, Students, Customers
3. Culture, Relationships & Informal Processes
4. External Resources, Regulators, Investors/Funders, Partners
5. Structure and Formal Processes
6. Operations & Technology
7. Leadership, Alignment & Rewards
8. Results and Impacts

1. History and Origins. MMA began out of a vision given to Dr. Maxine Mimms, founder of Evergreen’s Tacoma Campus. She began MMA similarly to how she began the Tacoma school, with a small number of dedicated people who were responding to a need, called to a vision. They worked for no money until there was money. As a visionary, Dr. Mimms captured the spirits, hearts and minds of many who came and sat at the table with her to discuss her vision and how they could contribute to it. It is a powerful vision and a timely one. People brought their ideas, time, blood and sweat. Then the urgency and necessity to get money arrived.

The formal purpose of MMA is to provide a transformative experience for “suspended and expelled” students and their families, returning them to school as high performers. An informal purpose of providing for the business/personal goals of MMA members’ may sometimes take precedence. When this happens, we need to understand the power of organizational culture and help to align the culture and leadership philosophy with the true purpose of the system.

In the history of how this organization began are the seeds for the success and limiting patterns it currently experiences. It is not, however, destined to continue these limitations.

In my client work, research and writing on transformation over the past twenty years, it has become apparent to me that when a person, group, family or organization wants it and intends it, healing can and does occur. A new reality can be created. Transformation happens, with choice, intention, healing and aligned actions. The promise of the butterfly is already within the caterpillar.

2. Potential and Actual Clients, Students and Customers. MMA has been getting students by referral from the School District. MMA has not yet conducted evaluation activities to assess its effectiveness in terms of impact on students and families. Students often comment on how important their experiences are at MMA. Some would even prefer to stay at MMA than return to the regular classroom. Students are faced with a complex set of challenges requiring collaborations with community partners to come to provide the “prevention” and “interventions” needed for them and their families. The experiences of students and families before and after MMA are significant sources of information for MMA’s intentions to be a best practices model. The School Districts are also current and potential customers who can benefit from professional development and other technical assistance regarding the “suspended and expelled” population. Consulting, like the Federal Way “after school” contract, is a path for generating revenue to compliment funds procured via grants and contributions. This is why I included building capacity to deliver consulting in partnership with REAP to school districts who wish to learn and transform to address the needs of youth who tend to get “suspended and expelled.”

3. Culture. The initial culture of an organization rises out of the founding leadership’s personality and evolves based on the system’s response to critical incidents over time.

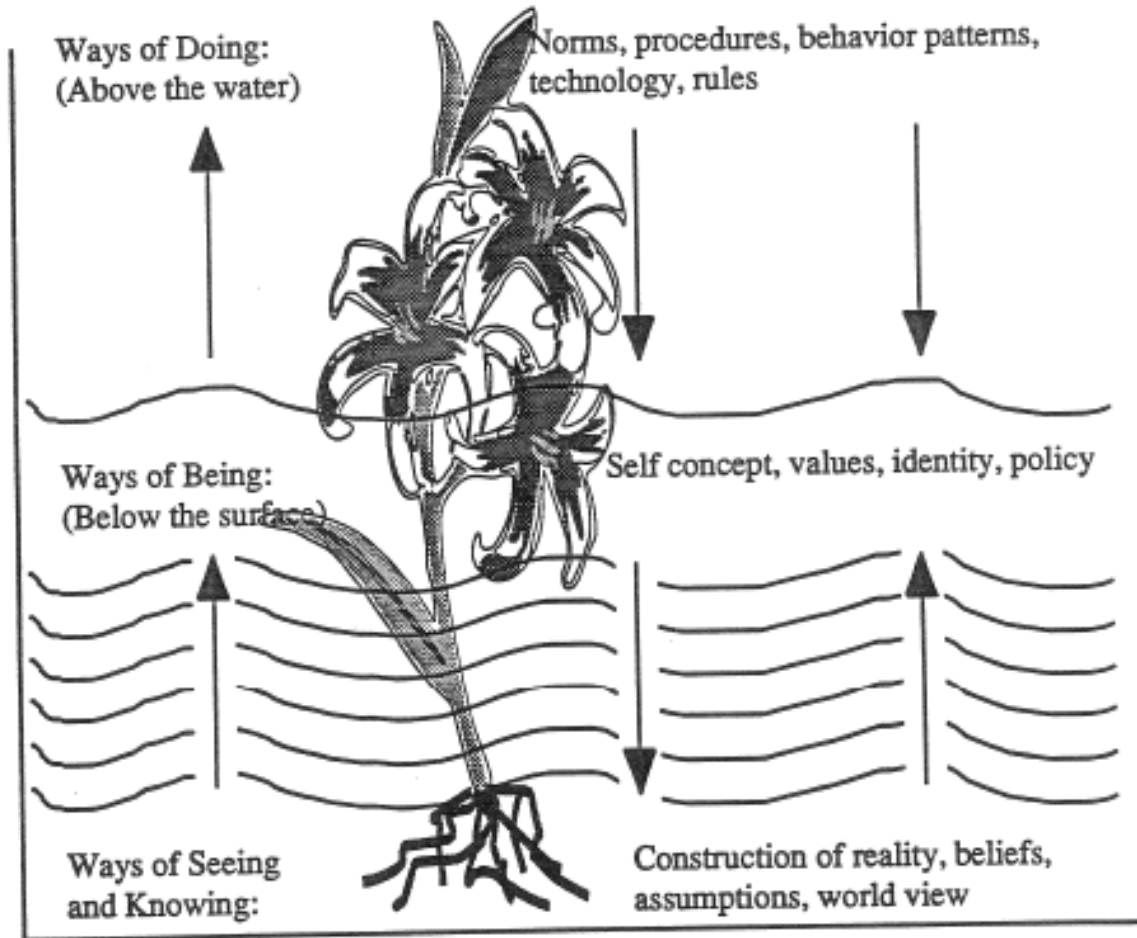
What goes on paper and in the articles of incorporation is part of the formal structure. The informal structure in any system, however, is more powerful in determining reality and outcomes than the formal structure is. Culture is the context in which everything happens for an organization – programs, funding, creativity, etc. Culture is to MMA like water, air, earth, moon and sun are to the fish, the sea-going people and vessels, and the food of the earth. **See “Three Levels of Culture and Change.”** Although the roots of a culture and many of its aspects are invisible, the culture wields substantial power in a system, determining the way things go with its patterns and use of symbols, language and images.

The bedrock/root level of culture is the most powerful level to address in transformation, ultimately influencing the other levels of identity and behaviors, operations, technology and structure.

Staff, students, parents and contractors have used many words to describe MMA, its work and its ways of operating. Among the terms I've heard are: spiritual, crisis-oriented; chaotic; dedicated, life-savers, organic; true helpers, innovative; open doors, unorganized, transformative; and unprofessional. MMA's culture is self protective, dynamic, volatile, spiritually oriented and based on family, community and friendship affiliations. MMA cannot yet count on each person to do what needs to be done on behalf of the organization, but it seems committed to keep each person in the same ship. If in crisis, the assumption has been we will all sink or swim together, but if the ship is going to go down, the captain will do something to keep it afloat and keep everyone in it, according to the espoused leadership philosophy. If a person doesn't want to stay aboard, however, he or she can always jump, let go or move on.

Three Levels of Change & Culture

By Darya Funches, Ed.D., REAP Unlimited



(The River Bed)

"Change the way people think, and things will never be the same"

– Stephen Biko

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When doing organizational assessments, I use include a heuristic approach, incorporating the experiences I have in the system as part of understanding and learning about the culture and operations. My experiences with MMA brought to mind a medicine dream I had in 2002, for my own work in transformation. I wrote about the dream and called it Don't Feed Nuts and Berries to a Drowning Man, Woman. The dream has two parts, which I'll share an abbreviation of here.

The Dream-1st Part

At first, I leave shore, dressed in white, rowing in a canoe into deep waters. As I row farther away from shore, I notice a man, also dressed in a white shirt. His brown hands are flailing in the air as his head barely reaches above water. I realize that he is drowning, and my intention is to help. As I get closer, he continues to flounder in the water, yet he is intent to get the help I have to offer. As I reach him, he reaches his hand toward me for help, and I reach out my hand, offering him something. Nuts and berries. He looks at me in fright, and begins to sink again. At that moment, I hear a loud Inner Voice, stating with authority, "Don't feed nuts and berries to a drowning man, woman!!!"

As if the world was heeding this advice instantly, all action and visuals in the dream rewind back to the original shore where I first entered the canoe.

The Dream-2nd Part

I row out to the deep water again, approaching the drowning man. This time, as he reaches his hand toward me, I reach out to him also, offering something. I offer a lifeline, looking like a luminous rope, which he takes hold of and begins to use to pull himself into closer to the boat, resting for a moment and now able to breathe more easily. Because of the rope, he is able to get several breaths of air in a row. Seated securely in the boat, I help to pull him toward the side of it, and hold steady as he comes close enough to lift himself in. Then, I offer him a blanket, as he begins to dry off and get warmer. As we approach the shore, I help him out and we go inside where there is a fire. I reach into my bag and offer something in my hand. Nuts and berries. He smiles, and accepts.

The next day, he begins to build new structures where I live upon the shore. Surprised, I realize that it seemed that I was rescuing him. In truth, we were rescuing one another. Each of us makes the other's mission possible.

The dream has helped me in my work with individuals, groups and organizations that are extremely challenged and threatened with survival. There are stages to providing support, healing and transformation for individuals, communities, nations, and even nonprofit organizations. If they are drowning, the first step is to offer the lifeline.

The time we are in now is a time of expanding leadership based on the feminine principle. It is not a time for the feminine to back off or for the masculine principle to overpower or dominate. It is a time for the feminine to expand in men and women.

From the dream I realize that the type of support people in crisis need is often the very support that others are not willing to provide. They want to provide nuts and berries and organizations often first need the lifeline. Foundations and other funders often don't want to provide the lifeline for a nonprofit organization that is in crisis. They, like banks, want to support organizations that are already stable in terms of their finances and infrastructure. To assist those who are more stable is less of a risky investment. This is understandable. Still, it is both a challenge and an opportunity to provide assistance to younger nonprofits, like MMA, who need substantial support to become more stable. **MMA provides help to many children and families who need a lifeline, while MMA needs a lifeline itself.**

The dream is also a way of understanding the partnership between the masculine and feminine in the time in which we are living. It is not about men and women, but about the masculine and feminine principles. "He" is an instrument for conscious energy and action in the picture. "She" is making the unknown known and bringing resources to the surface. "She" is the vessel. "She" gives birth and form. "He" brings seeds and focused energy for action. "He" is not dependent on her to live and does not draw from her energy. "He" brings and generates energy for the vision. "He" learns from her the connection to Source and Supply and builds the space to provide safety and security. Both principles in balance are needed in MMA and the world for effectiveness and to support the health and wholeness of students and their families.

At the bottom of the water is the bedrock where cultures have their "ways of seeing and knowing, assumptions and beliefs." Next in the water are the identity and the system's ways of being. Above the surface are the ways of doing things. As the dream shows, my work is to make the invisible visible and help the system to bring the potential into form, using the masculine and the feminine. I have experience with drowning, with land, wind, and with fire. I have experience with the lifeline and with the sequence needed to bring what is hidden and concealed into the light, to bring what needs to come forward into focus and to move what has finished its purpose into the background.

MMA provides a place for transformation for students who have been temporarily or permanently thrown out of the public schools. They and their families may be drowning. MMA is offering passage to them. In a sense it is supposed to be a "lifeline", brought by those who come from a solid shore, travel in a sound vessel, and

can help take others back to such a place. It must have a solid vessel, a container to offer students and their families as they flounder in the water. To do this and be able to stand on firm ground itself. Currently, the culture is not providing a firm container for this passage, which can lead to turmoil for staff and students. There are leaks in the boat. The academy is not standing on a firm shore. But it can and it will. It must stand on the shore of its spiritual purpose, its true origins.

When an organization attempts to change by rearranging things on the surface, it is like people rearranging chairs on the deck of the Titanic. When it wants to become more of its true self, reaching its true potential, it must work at the “bedrock,” and at its roots. This takes collective focus, will, time and attention. Regardless of what we “know,” habitual patterns can drive situations when incidents in the environment trigger these. Transformation calls for the leadership transforming first. Incidents which evoke fear and limiting patterns are also gifts from Spirit and the environment to help us through the initiations of visionary leadership and activism. They provide tests. No matter how much we know, we cannot fool God, the Spirit or the Universe about our emotions, beliefs and unresolved issues. We are tested in these ways until we heal. As we heal, we release the old patterns. We can co-create a new reality.

On the next page, I use a framework I’ve developed to apply to MMA’s current and potential realities, capturing metaphors to represent different perspectives of the culture. See “Four Visible and Invisible Faces of MMA.”

Four Visible and Invisible Faces of MMA, © Darya Funches, Ed.D. 2004]

<p><u>An Educational Oasis of Hope for Wounded Refugees/Exiles</u></p> <p>Including staff members and students. People who are in great need themselves have come to or been invited to the table. This sometimes makes it difficult to select people with the right skills or willingness to self-educate to get the necessary work done. Students, meanwhile, are the reason for the oasis of hope.</p>	<p><u>A Lifeline Ministry of Education, Family and Community Service, and Economic Development</u></p> <p>To become this, MMA develops itself as a sound vessel/container for the students and for funding. It must be well, although it can teach from a history of wounding. It understands economics, transformation, entrepreneurship, technology and the family services. It must “go to school”. It must bring forward a wisdom/elder council, bringing self esteem and indigenous wisdom to its community.</p>
<p><u>A Nuclear Dysfunctional Post-Slavery Family</u></p> <p>Traumatized by loss of homes, finances, land base, family connections, castration and rapes of the men/boys, rapes of the women and still inspired by Spirit and ground of hope. Looking for support from the Mother to provide stability, support and take care of the members equitably. Anxious about Mother’s chaos, fear and uncertainty. Looking for support and leadership from the Father, who often feels too wounded to lead, provide for and protect the system.</p> <p>The Mother protects and challenges the Father, who feels castrated and devoured by her. The Father is present, yet absent, feeling inadequate to carry out his role. The young man carries the hope of the masculine principle—generating the seeds. The young woman carries the hope of the feminine principle—making it happen—yet too much falls to her and the young man—to know all, do all, track all.</p>	<p><u>A High Tech-High Touch-High Performing Business Team and System</u></p> <p>Although this face is part of MMA’s “becoming” life, it is caught in a generational challenge because the system “mother” and “father” are not technology users or technology oriented. Still, technology is critical to the current and future economies as much as the technology of “use of self” is critical to the present and future. The technology area is paid at the lowest level and is seen as producing at a low level at MMA.</p> <p>Staff has the challenge of learning/doing what they want the students to learn/do. Acknowledge the truth about what you know/don’t know. Face fear. Learn and use technology. Engage in healing and reconciliation. Take action and follow through. Do it or get out of the way.</p>
<p><u>An Entrepreneurial Laboratory for Staff, Contractors, and Students</u></p> <p>This approach has had mixed results to generate \$\$ for staff/contractors or for MMA operations on the whole. The most success was achieved by a consultant who got the CTED grant for MMA. His role as an entrepreneur, however, created other problems. Youth entrepreneurship is a rich area for potential MMA funding in Washington state and beyond.</p>	<p><u>Responsible System Stewards, Workers and Accountants</u></p> <p>Responsible for and productive with public and private funds, time and energy for the service of students, families and the community.</p>
<p><u>A Field Hospital Medical Unit-MASH Unit</u></p> <p>The triage emphasis is one of crisis intervention. This matches the crisis management orientation the staff may have “caught” from the nature of the work or from the styles of the founder and director. MASH works in the field with a tent or tipi, and minimal equipment and supplies. There is scarcity and one is accustomed to it. Yet, these “temporary” circumstances are ongoing and they occur in a war zone.</p>	<p><u>“The Healed Wounded Healer”</u></p> <p>The Wounded Healer can teach and assist others based on the transformations he or she has experienced. “A visionary leader cannot take a system anyplace he or she has not been, at least in consciousness.” [D. Funches, 1992] The same is true of a visionary organization or team. Remember, “Physician, heal thyself.” The Wounded Healer learns to recognize, accept and take his/her own medicine, as individuals and as a whole system.</p>

There are tensions between these operating metaphors. The visible faces are already showing, expressed, attempted, spoken and/or manifested, although the manifestations may not be healthy or successful by internal and/or external standards. The invisible faces are those in the spiritual origins of the system and its authentic potential and purposes. Working correctly with the images, affects, and tensions between and among the invisible and visible faces is what makes the potential reality into actual reality.

For example, consider that MMA is a family that tends to care about and take care of one another, except it has what is supposed to be a superior mission---to save the children. If it is a family and it is a MASH unit, which comes first: The patient in crisis or the MMA staff member who has a personal crisis at home?

When you consider the medical emergency model, staff needs our own “triage” to get on solid ground, repair the vessel, offer the lifeline and give safe passage. The wounded healer needs healing. The past couple of years have provided incidents from which you can learn how to make the vision viable in practice. This learning must be a shared experience, not transferred only by the visionary, but transferred by everyone who has been involved in terms of their vision of MMA as a best practices model. The triage refers to discerning and allocating the nature of treatment at intake in an acute medical situation. Is this the nucleus of MMA’s power? Or is it greater?

4. Structure and Formal Processes, Including Stages of Development, Generations and Legacies.

In systems, formal structure is supposed to follow form and purpose. Other factors, however, can interfere in determining structure, like the demands of external forces such as funding sources. This may have happened to some extent at MMA regarding roles, titles and salaries. Anything that has been done, however, can be undone if need be to support the overall performance and good of the students.

When systems and teams are young, they tend to understand less about the “good of the whole system” than they do when they are more mature. High performing organizations address system needs related to purpose and goals, and are not driven primarily by individual member needs unless they are organizations built primarily to meet individual needs, like support groups. Organizations need sound infrastructures as they grow to support the goals, tasks and vision. Otherwise, they become like a 10 year old without sufficient organs and bones to support a growing body. MMA is like a fast-growing, precocious toddler that needs to make sure it develops strong bones. It is growing into something more than can be grown by a family that stays in the mindset of post-traumatic slave syndrome. This would call for a choice for transformation to be healed itself and move forward.

Dr. Mimms works to cultivate people and encourage them to do whatever they WANT to do. It is as if they are educational entrepreneurs, and that she presumes the way to develop the system to its highest order is to give the individuals the most acceptance and freedom. Did some of the players she picked accept the invitation for reasons other than this purpose? Or have competing priorities and/or historical conditioning taken first position to what is in the highest interest of the system on the whole?

Although the approach at MMA to leadership may be a great and wise educational model, it is not necessarily the best model for creating a high performing system when that system has the job of providing a solid container and vessel of education and intervention for students and families in crisis. The container must be large enough, strong enough, free of leaking holes, and able to organize the energy included for action.

At her stage of life, Dr. Mimms may have a different sense of urgency about getting all aspects of the vision into operation as part of her legacy. What steps have been taken to pass on the legacy so that it operates beyond her life span? There needs to be clarity among the MMA team about succession and how this will progress, at least for the next generation. Structurally, MMA must think far beyond the next pay check and the next funding cycle.

There is great beauty in the four generations present in the organization, doing this significant work. The size of the staff, however, makes this spread more intense and difficult to manage resources. Organizationally, it is hard to tell whether MMA is a toddler needing more bone and organ development, or an adolescent who has the internal structure needed to function, but has the emotional predisposition to struggle against restrictions and authority of others, wishing for autonomy but remaining dependent upon others.

5. External Resources and Funding

When the system has had blood before, however, it has not yet followed the protocol for healthy functioning. MMA is like a patient that has a crisis, gets an intervention, and hops up out of the bed and does what it did before it had the crisis, possibly ignoring the prescriptions of the doctor. This doesn't mean that everyone ignores the prescription, however, but that the system does not get on top of its game, despite the critical nature of the situation. One or two people take steps to intervene to get the resources or make critical course direction, which does not necessarily change the behavior of the entire system.

Funds are the lifeblood of the organization, and Staff is the heart, so the heart is willing, but sufficient blood is not yet here. The organization gets occasional emergency transfusions, but not enough to keep all organs functioning well. The system is in high anxiety, anticipating insufficient resources to operate and perform. While staff speaks God as the source of support and supply, the system expresses high anxiety about funds.

When MMA is not collectively aware of its true funding needs it is caught in a “get-the-money-from- anywhere-and-figure-out-accounting-for-it-later” modality. This modality, however, is changing as leadership/ staff become more aware about it and its impact. . The underlying mindset about funding has been small, possibly because the strategic work, measurable goal setting [for the next few years] and related budgeting is not yet done. MMA is now in the process of changing this by seeking funding for building a strategic plan, a capacity building plan, and implementation of these.

The early approach to generating revenue ideas included the notion that people who felt called by the vision would be invited to sit at the table. Using Dr. Mimms’ name and the Academy’s name to create entrepreneurial ventures, these people could develop ideas into projects that would benefit the entrepreneur and the Academy too.

This fund development approach has an underlying assumption of MMA as an entrepreneurial laboratory for individual growth and development of staff/contractors. This approach did not lead to enough funding to provide revenue for staff until a consultant with substantial contacts was hired to bring in money.

At the time, the system somehow separated itself from the money, its requirements and its consequences, acting as if the consequences were not there in some cases. Although all have learned from the difficulties in doing this, when a money crisis comes, panic can set in and the same old pattern becomes tempting.

Perhaps half of the staff needs income from the Academy to support their lives; the other half do not. All staff accepted the conditions of their pay, yet all are not satisfied with their own funding. At one time, it seemed as if being in financial need was part of the entry to be “at the table” at MMA. Staff may enter without the necessary skills to do the work while being drawn by the mission and vision and the potential to make money. It is a place where staff can build skills and learn, however, with resources to support this intention.

The early mindset was “get the money wherever we can, and we’ll worry later about what we have to do to account for it.” Perhaps money is in part a reward to meet the needs of staff who once worked for no money, loyally.

6. Operations and Technology

Because of the challenges about leadership expectations of the Executive Director, there is tension about where the Visionary/Founder should be involved in operations. Resolving this area of tension, confusion and conflict is one of the priorities for the capacity building work of MMA.

Likewise, there is uncertainty about technology in MMA and how to use it to meet system and student needs. The Technology Director operates with minimal revenue, low morale, and low pay. Clarifying a direction for this area and how to integrate it into the lifeblood of MMA should be a priority for the organization, if it chooses to live the reality of the coming face of a high tech, high touch and high performing system.

7. Leadership, Alignment and Rewards. Like 'reading is fundamental,' leadership, administration and follow up are fundamental, for high performing, high touch, and high technology systems. It is time to step up to this work or step out of the way. High performance cannot be merely based on what individual members WANT to do, but based on what needs to be done on behalf of the whole system. Whatever the agreements were about structure and roles at the beginning of MMA, these may not be relevant now that all know more about the tasks at hand, the gifts people bring, and the needs of the system given its accountability to students, funding sources and the community.

MMA is out of balance with provision of funds for the work done. If MMA professionals observed a racially diverse organization with the variations in salary levels it has, it would consider it a basis for a discrimination case.

Salaries are only one type of reward. Once money entered the picture, however, things have changed for the MMA team. Only two, and at most half, of the leadership team members may be in a position of not needing a market-standard salary at MMA salary to meet their financial requirements. One of these people is the visionary and the founder. MMA may be costing her more than it is giving her financially. If not now, then this was true in the past. Like a family, however, there are issues about measures of reward and meeting the needs of members. All volunteered, perhaps under the assumption that 'when the money comes, all will be settled in a fair and equitable way.' Yet, when the money came, more tension came, because people began to perceive that they were not rewarded in a balanced or fair way. If there are 4 children and 3 get new shoes and 1 doesn't, the one who doesn't begins to feel he/she must be disinherited, not valued, and so forth. Later he/she begins to compare what he/she is asked to do versus what others are asked to do, checking out the difference in rewards. Just as addressing racism, internalized oppression or protests and action for human rights begin. Conditioning about not being valued, or good enough can become a barrier and block to performance.

Despite these internal challenges, the family fiercely defends the Academy against outside interventions, interference and criticisms, for the most part.

Those who don't do what is needed don't do it because they don't know how or don't want to, and because they don't have to. Others step in or the needed task is not done. This increases stress, resentment, and threats to the overall reputation of the program.

The spoken leadership philosophy is: "Everyone is accepted as they are and no one is wrong. Everyone is right. The competent person is just as important as the incompetent person. The person who works hard all the time is no more important than the lazy person who lies down and does nothing. I don't get rid of anyone. They get rid of themselves. I grow my own and people who work with me are going to grow. I offer a situation where they can grow and they do."

How does the philosophy of unconditional acceptance and love get applied when the performance of staff places the program itself at risk? The philosophy calls for you to love and accept the weakest link just as you would the strongest link. Does loving and accepting others to you mean that no one is ever asked to leave? People may choose to leave if they think they are somehow harming the program, or they can choose to change their behavior.

The Founder sees the management team and staff in the same way and with the same philosophy as she sees the suspended and expelled student. No one will be expelled or fired, regardless of his or her performance at MMA. Yet MMA has firm commitments to meet for its funding sources and there are consequences for not meeting these goals and commitments. She knows how to be in and how to be out, but seems to be exploring to find the best zone in which to support operations without undermining Bob Penton, the Executive Director. Her intention is to support everyone, including the Executive Director AND to keep the vision and program alive, becoming a best practices model.

Decisions seem to be made based on what some individual managers need, rather than based on what the system needs to accomplish its goals.

Dr. Maxine Mimms, the Visionary and Founder, is the Shadow Director of MMA, although her interest at this time is not in day to day operations. She moves back and forth, as the need or demand arises, between operational decision-making and outside ventures to support the Academy. She does this through consultations with the Executive Director. The relationship between the two leaders, the founder and the director, seems to be confounding certain problems in the organization.

8. Results and Impacts

It is time to find the results of the work thus far. It is essential. Tracking and monitoring results is more than a one year process. A pilot need not be only a year, yet the CTED funding is currently for one year. For future funding, MMA may consider a few years of funding at a time to demonstrate, innovate and capture documentation of results as it develops best practices. It may take three years. It is a pilot until it is to the point that it is transferable and regenerative, with critical processes and products outlined that others can follow. As a pilot, however, it would need measurable goals for each of the years in question. Funding for evaluation research becomes essential

The demands and needs of the students are greater than what is being offered, although MMA has the resources to offer. MMA is sometimes like a person with checks in the mail, who does not open their mail because of stress he or she is under. The very things that will assist a person in stress and crisis are often the most difficult things for him or her to do. Without follow up in the schools, it is difficult to see the successes and to know where to make improvements for best practices. More funding will come with more clarity about learning, specific needs and results. Yet funding is needed to do, review and make meaning of this important documentation work.

Currently the program is in need of Intensive Care, in part because of leadership tensions and funding challenges, all of which are resolvable, and treatable in a the same sense that MMA assists incoming students and families in its "Triage" vision. Yet, when staff needs emergency intervention, it is challenging to provide it to others.

III. Recommendations for Thought and Action

MMA wants to become and is becoming a “best practices model” for addressing suspended and expelled students. The following excerpts are from the Wikipedia.org dictionary.

“**Best Practice**” is a [management idea](#) which asserts that there is a [technique](#), method, process, activity, incentive or reward that is more effective at delivering a particular outcome than any other technique, method, process, etc. The idea is that with proper processes, checks, and testing, a project can be rolled out and completed with fewer problems and unforeseen complications.”

Best practices continually evolve. The notion of 'best practices' does not commit people or companies to one inflexible, unchanging practice. Instead, Best Practices is a philosophical approach based around continuous learning and continual improvement.

For example, the American Productivity and Quality Centre (APQC) suggest that: "Three themes resonate through successful benchmarking and best-practice transfer efforts:

1. Transfer is a people-to-people process; meaningful relationships precede sharing and transfer.
2. Learning and transfer is an interactive, ongoing, and dynamic process that cannot rest on a static body of knowledge. Employees are inventing, improvising, and learning something new every day.
3. Benchmarking stems from a personal and organizational willingness to learn. A vibrant sense of curiosity and a deep respect and desire for learning are the keys to success."

Best practices do not have one template or form for everyone to follow. In the context of Business Management, “Best Practice” is the concept that a good process, and planning, is being followed in the [Execution Management](#) of a [project plan](#), and that changes to the initial plan, dependencies, and goals are being tracked and documented.

Best Practices and Kaizen. “The Japanese word [kaizen](#) has been imported into Western organizational language and stresses the importance of efforts to improve constantly. This ethos is antithetical to the commonly accepted notions of best practice. Some organizations consider their Best Practices to be a badge of honor, believing that having adopted this technique, method or process that further improvement is not the priority that it was before that particular practice was implemented.

1. “Best Practices” is ideally, and at the core of the concept, the defining of methods used to get things done. Benefits often include the assurance of quality results and consistency when the process is followed.” **Close operations for a 1 to 4 month period, focusing on death, healing and rebirth.** As a small system that is at the edge of being able to do business as usual, it is advisable to take this time period to stop certain patterns, heal the past, build and be ready to implement certain systems, initiate new ways of being, doing and seeing the world for MMA, it may be advisable to stop operations. During such a sabbatical, we can do the strategic and developmental work to get the organization together on its directions so that you can collectively bring success to MMA, the students and families, rather than bring more crises. If you were a larger organization, you might be able to grow, to absorb strategic and capacity building work, and keep operating at the same time. As a small system, it would be less stressful for managers, all staff and students if you take the time to ensure a sound container for the Academy, accelerating achieving best practices status.

2. There should never be another budget done for a proposal using the current salary levels. The salary and/or consultant levels need to be set at market rate and then adjustments made within those ranges for the individuals in those jobs and the amount of time they are expected to work. Isa has begun work on the budget and it can be finalized after agreeing about the scope and nature of initiatives over the next few years.

3. Focus on a microchip of the vision in action, and achieve decided, unquestionable success there first. Then add other initiatives and projects that expand the Academy into the community. Succeed with a decided number of suspended and expelled students, learning the outcomes of the interventions you’ve made over a multi-year period. The visionary may or may not live to see all of these things done, but they will be done if she and the rest of the team collectively become excellent stewards of the vision and the resources, holding self and one another accountable.

4. Address leadership, performance, and pay issues directly in terms of specific behaviors and consequences. Staff speaks of needing a behavior modification specialist for students. The same is needed for staff members. Now that there is money for service, the organization has to be accountable not only to its funding sources but to staff and contractors for expectations for services rendered. When everyone is volunteering, equity issues take a different form; people just want to help and sometimes get recognition and commitments of what will happen when money is available. When salaries are not commensurate with skills, hours and roles, some staff members feel like volunteers when they are not. People may occasionally behave like volunteers or respond inconsistently in terms of availability and performance. The leadership philosophy of paying people the same whether they are working or not can lead to people resenting one another and or to them doing less to go beyond their jobs to take care of things.

5. Put the right people in the right positions at the right pay. Consider what staff would say for each person to the following statements about one another at MMA: “If I knew then what I know now, I would hire you for ‘x position’ at MMA;” “If I knew then what I know now, I would pay you ‘y dollars’ to work at MMA.” All staff members do not seem to share Dr. Mimms’ philosophy about salaries, competence and performance.

6. Continue to do “damage control” on grants initiated by previous fund development consultant, and offer good follow up and closure, but stop seeking funding through those particular contacts. That work was “contact-based” and even if you had formed relationships with the funder, the primary commitment in some cases was to the consultant as the Contractor’s Representative. You’ve already done “damage control” meetings and this should continue to include phone calls, letters of appreciation for their interest/funds; regrets if relationship with the previous fund developer did not work out; and forward looking comments about the future in the event they become interested in MMA’s program again.

7. Do immediate follow-up on all other proposals that were rejected or minimally funded this year. Solicit feedback about the low level funding for certain requests, like Puyallup and Lilly.

8. Agree to submit future proposals through the Organization and Fund Development Director. This helps to decrease fragmentation and may increase success with the amounts received. Although you may have a good proposal, it may need to be altered strategically and substantively for different funding sources. The contract you established with a previous fund development consultant was “contact based” and “self promotion based,” meaning that the primary order of business was using contacts to get money for MMA that also funded contract opportunities for him. This is and was the mode for MMA on the whole, in terms of motivation for fund development.

What MMA needs, however, is fund development based on the vision and strategic initiatives, measurable goals and needs for capacity-building. Bob Penton and I discussed the fact that I would move more into Capacity Building work as the funds arrive for it.

9. Based on discussions with leadership, D. Funches prepares the narrative portion of all proposals for grants/contracts that are for MMA, and makes contact with the funder, even if the person is a contact of another staff/manager. This will give a strategic thrust to the proposals, based on the funder, and a “consistent” face for fund development. . The rest of the team makes inputs to the proposals, as agreed. This input process is likely to be by email, although when time permits, input may be done by a group meeting as part of a staff meeting. MMA’s Executive Director needs to be a part of driving the funding process in collaboration with a Fund Development Leader.

10. Court wealthy individuals to develop a \$10,000,000 endowment for MMA that will sustain general administration and minimal operations for a period of at least 12 years, including a capital budget. We can do this after we get a basic business and strategic plan for a 10 year period. The remainder of the operational funds can be developed from different foundation grants. Then we can focus on doing the work, not working the streets. We can do this courting in pairs, recognizing that some results may be instant; others can take over 2 to 3 years.

11. Conceptualize the invisible faces that MMA wants to develop and the aspects of the visible faces you want to alter. Then activate these strategically as part of the vision. For example, triage is a powerful metaphor for needed emergency intervention, which is part of what MMA does. It may not, however, be the desired end state of what you are really here to create over time. The implication of permanent Triage under the MASH metaphor is that you are a temporary unit that provides excellent care under challenging situations in a war zone. If the ultimate vision is that you do this emergency care as a best practice then this is your vision. If the ultimate vision is that you are eliminating the need for emergency care because the war on children and the wounding bullets have stopped, then the vision you want to bring forth is something else.

IV. Tasks, Roles and Timetable for Priorities

1. F.D. Team discusses and sets goals and strategic initiatives for 2007 through 2009: Youth entrepreneurship; health and nutrition project; summer youth program; strategic planning and capacity building; including board development; elder wisdom council, transformation and leadership education, family systems therapy, and more projects/initiatives.
2. Prepare budget for initiatives for 2007 through 2009.
3. Team agrees on fund development strategies, some being better than others for different initiatives.
4. F.D. Team members share contact information of potential funding sources
5. Review priorities and initiatives of select potential funding sources.
6. Agreement/commitment to projects to seek funding for 2007-2009
7. Contact potential funders to discuss their priorities, initiatives and build their interest in MMA making a grant application
8. Develop power point presentation of MMA for funding sources – agencies, foundations and individual philanthropists
9. Make input to draft letters of inquiry [LOI's]
10. Finalize LOI's and submit these to funders
- 11 Submit grant applications
12. Follow up, schedule site visits

V. Next Steps

1. Winter Management Retreat-January 29 and 30th
2. Review and discuss report
3. Exercises for identifying/releasing patterns
4. Role clarifications/negotiations
5. Visions of “best practices” or national model
6. Making it real – steps, commitments, agreements, follow up
7. Scope of work for capacity building effort
8. Fund development – project priorities
9. Closing

APPENDIX D. Winter Report Addendum February 11, 2007

For Maxine Mimms Academies

Darya Funches, Ed.D. , © 2007 REAP Unlimited Consulting

These comments are an addendum to the Winter Retreat Report, based on items/questions raised there that we were not able to discuss further, given schedule constraints. I have also included some additional comments for areas where the leadership team needs to give more reflection about choices. Although we do not have funding yet for Capacity Building, I am volunteering this technical assistance at the moment, without funds for payment for additional consulting time, because these matters are essential for resolution and forward motion. Once I return from India and Philadelphia, I will finalize the Winter Report originally submitted. Meanwhile, I hope these comments are helpful as an Addendum to the DRAFT Winter Report.

1. Visionary Views and Operational Decisions: How much should a visionary be involved in daily operational choices and decisions? When is this helpful and when does it become interference?

I think there are 3 notions which give rise to this question at MMA, so I will address the notions which I think are at the root of the question: clarity of the vision, shared ownership in developing vision, and boundaries of power/authority for implementation.

- a. Clarity of the Vision:** When a vision is sufficiently clear, everyone closely associated with the organization and certainly everyone on the management team is able to tell you what the vision is. There is a difference between having a mission/purpose and having a vision. The mission/purpose is your reason for being, the organizing principle of the system or organization. It is what you intend to accomplish. Purpose or mission statements may sometimes be in the articles of incorporation of an organization, although not necessarily. Often corporations give themselves latitude in the legal papers of the corporation so that they can do whatever they choose to do within legal limits, yet they develop an official mission statement for consumption of the general public and employees.

In my work with organizations, I say the mission is your reason for being and the vision is your picture of what you/the world look like when you fulfill your mission. The strategy can be expressed as strategic initiatives with specific goals for each initiative. This strategy is the way you intend to make the vision a reality, and there are goals for each initiative, and plans for each goal under each initiative. This is how you take the vision and strategy into operations.

Although the vision may be only one or two sentences in length, it is important to paint a “detailed picture” of the vision in the minds and hearts of all who are involved in making it happen. There is a lot of talk at MMA about “the vision.” Ironically, “the vision” is not yet something everyone can describe. Each person would point to something different and describe something different if asked about the vision. Because of all the discussion about vision over the past few years, clarifying the vision and an agreed upon statement of it will not be a difficult task. We should do this work in a team meeting.

- b. Shared Ownership:** Although visions are lofty ideas, visions are also detailed microchips of a new reality. A visionary leader gives birth to a vision by founding an organization and/or by engaging others in the spirit of the idea. Those who engage the vision must own it too. If the vision is experienced as the domain of the visionary to the exclusion of others, then everyone has essentially joined in to march in the visionary’s parade, unsure of the destination unless the visionary, as parade marshal, tells everyone periodically what it is and what it will look like when they get there.

At MMA, the team treats the vision as if the visionary/founder has it and the rest of the team is supposed to catch it somehow. It is the responsibility of the visionary to paint a clear enough picture of the vision for others to imagine it and engage with it. It is the responsibility of others to begin to tell their own stories of the destination and their involvement in it. Together, everyone builds the picture/story of the destination, their journey to it and the impact of achieving/fulfilling the vision. At REAP Unlimited, we help with this process by facilitating development of a Vision Story. Through this story, everyone gains ownership of the vision.

Building such a story helps to clarify the boundaries of a vision – what is in, what is out; what is fundamentally different about the vision versus today’s actual reality, and so forth. Without such an exercise, it is easy to have misunderstandings about the scope of the true vision.

When a venture is small, like MMA, it is good for the management team to work out dilemmas in the concept of the vision, along with the visionary/founder. Together, they make choices that clearly make a difference, rather than have this solely figured out by the visionary. The vision is to be a compelling picture and focal point, mobilizing energy for action, motivating people to get up in the morning and show up, inspiring people to commit resources to assist and so forth.

As conflicts in thought arise between the vision and philosophy, these can be corrected and seen in terms of what is to change operationally/pragmatically. The opportunity and challenge of teaching, learning and integrating learning into best practices arise in the midst of such tensions. Clarity can emerge for the visionary and the team when you approach such conflicts as the action research experiment that you are.

A visionary leader who is also involved in operational decisions must be careful, however, about any tendencies to “flip flop” in terms of ideas and notions, as he/she is deciding what to do about differences in philosophy, strategy and tactical operations. Since everyone is learning about how to do this work for this population, it is understandable that you change your minds from time to time about how best to handle certain situations. Documenting the reasons for changing from one approach to another helps the learning process and future choices for replicating the model.

At MMA, the visionary is a part of operations as a consultant to the academic component, as one who participates in MMA activities in other locations, as one who signs checks, as one who makes gate-keeping decisions whenever she is present, and as one who consults with the Executive Director frequently about what needs to be done on a daily basis. These activities are operational.

- c. **Boundaries of power/authority for implementation:** The fact that the question comes up indicates there have been incidents where the Director and Founder, and perhaps others, have differed about roles, choices and authority. The Founder’s message may be “You make the daily operational decisions. I don’t want to be involved.” The unsaid message may be “And if you make the right decisions and act in a timely manner, I won’t have to get involved.” The Executive Director’s message appears to be “If I’m the Director, let me handle things in my own way and in my own time.” The unsaid part may be “Why should I make decisions without involving you when you are likely to reverse decisions that I make without you?” So the tension continues and may even continue to some extent, if there were a different person in the Director slot.

Issues about the current Director’s performance undermine his authority and tend to perpetuate the Founder’s behavior as the Director. Still, many administrative matters are primarily handled by I. Nichols, who is not in the position to make decisions as the Director.

There is no one answer to where the Founder should and should not be involved. There is only the answer of negotiating an agreement between the Founder and other team leaders so that there is a mutual understanding that all can honor. This still needs to be done when we know who the staff will be for MMA going forward.

Like most visionary founders, MMA's founder is in the position of staying in the lead in the early years and acknowledging herself as CEO until MMA is on firm ground; or putting someone else in the lead position she can trust to perceive and take care of priority strategic and operational matters. Now that there is a Board of Directors, this is really their job – to make sure the person in the Director's position is someone they think can/will carry out the strategic and operational priorities with good stewardship. Some Founders start as CEO and move into the position of Chair of the Board once the organization is on firm footing. Clearly, MMA is not yet on firm ground.

Officially, the Director is accountable to the Board. Unofficially, the Board is there to support the Founder, yet it has a fiduciary responsibility that is unavoidable. At MMA, the Director is unofficially accountable to the Founder who is not on the Board. Still MMA and its Board are accountable to the funding sources, the students, families, school system, and governmental regulatory bodies.

At MMA, it needs to be clear who has the authority to make particular decisions so that this does not have to get figured out or constantly negotiated. The TOPs process should help with this as a framework for looking at who has authority and responsibility for different aspects of operations.

2. Working out details in groups versus on one's own.

It might be more efficient if individuals who are responsible for various details work out proposals for implementation individually and present these to the total group, than to have the entire group always focus on details. Remember, when you ask the group to create detailed plans, you are using all the resources of the organization to figure something out. Decide wisely about using these resources this way: when do you really need the entire management team to develop an idea from scratch; when can you spend the individual time to work out a proposal independently and bring it before the team later; when do you need the founder's input on strategic direction, etc.?

3. Overall, boundary management and forming/sustaining a focus are two of the most pressing issues in MMA's dynamics.

In any and all staff meetings where she is present, the Founder is in charge of the meetings and is the gatekeeper, inviting others into the meetings. There is a notion that the door is always open, that all are welcome all the time, and that multi-tasking while doing MMA's work is always advisable. This mode of operation, however, limits MMA's overall performance and ability to complete tasks in a timely manner. Multi-tasking can be a strength. When this capability is over-used, however, it becomes a liability.

When the group gathers together to make group decisions about operational or strategic matters, and the meetings operate as a "here and now" group, open to those who appear, there are consequences to being able to complete tasks. The group may have a powerful and positive spiritual experience providing support to the people who show up. Still, there are consequences. Others who are responsible for carrying out work, for example, have to work longer hours to get the work done that was not done in the meeting. They may also have to do this work without the benefit of the group.

There is a practice in the process of doing Gestalt work that is called "bracketing." For a group to become high performing, it needs to be able to complete tasks well and in a timely manner. To do this, it needs to be able to hold a clear focus for long enough to achieve high quality results. If the work is "interrupted" by something critical, it needs to be able to make a decision about pursuing the interruption or staying on the previous task. At MMA, the Founder makes these decisions, not the group, and the group goes along, yet bears the consequences. People may be "depleted" by whatever "choices" they made, while the Founder may be "energized."

Remember, however, that these different experiences have more to do with the fact that the Founder is following what is "figural" for her to be done, while the group and each person in it is following her, not necessarily their own figural focus. Then she becomes "agitated" when the group is not in the same energetic space as she is. The group is attempting to grow/develop the right to "dissent" and speak up about when it wants to and doesn't want to shift into other activities; how it wants to manage its boundaries; and when it needs to handle details, regardless of the disinterest and difficulties some members have with details. The larger question for any group is "What is in the best interest of the whole, given the work to be done at this time?" With some interruptions, a larger MMA purpose to help others may be served, while a critical task you are in the midst of is left to be handled by others who came together to do it, but did not finish based on an interruption pursued during the group work session.

I strongly recommend that the team learn how to “bracket” and that group members participate more in setting and maintaining effective boundaries so that you accomplish more. I say this, recognizing that MMA has accomplished a tremendous amount with little resources in a short time. The recommendation is only to continue the growth and development in a healthy way.

4. Money is energy. Managing boundaries well and sustaining a focus well are connected to attracting, generating and using resources, such as money, well.

Think about it. How are you managing this energy? It can be taxing to hustle constantly for survival. We are faced with addressing the underlying beliefs and assumptions about MMA wanting and deserving funding to save the children; and wanting and deserving substantial resources which it will steward well. As I say at REAP Unlimited – Do you want it? Do you deserve it? Are you going to sow and reap it?

This time period where we are seeking additional funding to go forward is a critical time to surface underlying beliefs and assumptions about money, accountability, stewardship, and how each person has co-created the current state of affairs with his/her own thinking, beliefs and actions. Transformation and healing are key.

To save the children, we have to save ourselves. To save ourselves, we have to get in alignment, be focused and work accordingly, even doing those things which are hardest for us to do – doing those things which are outside our comfort zones, but which breakthrough to new results for students, families, staff and the organization on the whole.

