

## Morgan Hill Unified School District

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Glen Webb, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

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To whom it may concern,

It is my pleasure to endorse SchoolWise Press for their deep analytical expertise in the field of school improvement. Having worked with SWP for the past four years, I can comment on their extreme value to developing our district's data analysis capacity and evolving our strategic plans to become better stewards of public resources.

SWP has been particularly helpful in developing the data analysis skills of our district and site leaders. Data analysis had been a shallow exercise and data was often accepted as "just the way it is" as a default to not knowing how to move forward with confidence. Decision making was based on anecdotal understandings or beliefs which often missed the mark. SWP's Planning and Assessment explorers added context and time sequences to reveal true needs and their professional development has taught leaders how to dig down to root causes. As a result, our allocation of resources and programs have become more strategic and aligned rather than based on trial and error that varied from school to school.

Their use of quasi-longitudinal cohort data viewed in the context of a comparison group of most similar schools or districts has added sanity and calm perspective in the midst of the massive retooling of school accountability. With constant recalibration of new state metrics, inconsistent performance of new and evolving state assessments, and the ongoing tug of war between punitive vs. supportive school accountability, with SWP's guidance, our district has been able to sort through the false or misleading signals of the new accountability system to avoid over or underreacting to what the state's data may show.

There are several examples of where SWP's guidance has been instrumental, here's one. The 2017-18 SBAC testing results for our district showed a significant decline in 5th grade achievement. Several community groups and educators called for an examination of 5th grade teacher competency and an across the board assignment of 5th grade teacher to remedial professional development. Deeper analysis revealed that the same drop was experienced by our comparison groups as well as county-wide and statewide. The eventual culprit was identified not as poor 5th grade teacher efficacy, but as changes to the test bank accompanied by poor single test item calibration affecting the way the adaptive test performed year to year; hence, rendering the "change" dimension of the new dashboard unreliable. With this

information, we were able to calm the controversy and move forward rationally. Other districts were not so fortunate, with stories abounding of negative labels, grade reassignments, poor evaluations, and misguided professional development exacting a cost in morale and public resources.

In addition to calming the storms, SWP has been a true partner, not only helping to deepen our analytical skills and providing planning data, but by working hand-in-hand with us to develop meaningful local metrics and data visualizations to assist in communication with stakeholders. Several such SWP visuals have been highlighted in our Local Control Accountability Plans and School Plans for Student Achievement. With this communication, we have been able to guide our allocation of resources with stakeholder support to retool how we deliver services to students. With SWP's help, we have accelerated our implementation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and our strategic plans are under consideration for the California School Boards Association's Golden Bell Award in the area of school accountability.

SchoolWise Press has much to share and I wholeheartedly support any program that could help to increase the number of districts and schools that would benefit from their help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Glen R. Webb".

Glen Webb, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.