

Our Path to First Choice No. 12

Everyone,

Here is Path Note No. 12. Thank you for taking the time to read it.

Our Path Topic

Category 3 in Our Path to First Choice framework focuses on the *Customer*. Most of us in education are not used to referring to anyone as customers...let alone, students or parents. Nevertheless, students and parents are customers in a sense of the word and for the purposes of this topic. Students are really clients, and parents are customers. But, as we develop our ongoing improvement framework for WASD, we need to refer to our students and parents as customers. In addition, our community is considered a customer, too. Believe it or not, our employees sometimes can be referred to as a customer. But for this category, we will focus on students, parents, and the community.

Remembering from last week, *Leadership*, *Strategy*, and *Customer* are the “brains” or Leadership Focus of the framework. The customer’s needs drive the leadership to strategize how to meet those needs. It is about as simple as that. Let’s look at what are important questions to ask and information to know about the *Customer*.

First, let’s talk about the “voice of the customer”. How do we obtain various information from our students, parents, and others customers? How do we listen to, interact with, and observe students and other customers to obtain actionable information? Do we use different listening and interaction methods with different groups or market segments? Do we listen the same way to parents of district students as we would parents of cyber, charter, or private schools? How do we listen to community members? How do we use social media or web-based technologies (appropriately) to listen to students and others? How do we get immediate and actionable feedback on the quality of educational programs and services, student and other customer support, and transactions?

Are we doing anything to recruit or listen to potential, former, and competitor’s students and other customers about our programs and services? If we aren’t, how can we become *First Choice*?

We have to determine the satisfaction and engagement levels of our students, parents, and others. How are we doing this? What methods are we using? Are we addressing the different market segments as public, private, cyber, or charter school students, for example? Who do we measure to capture actionable information to use in exceeding our students’ and other customers’ expectations and securing our students’ and other customers’ engagement for the long term?

So, how do we get information on our students’ and parents’ satisfaction with WASD relative to other schools? Do we measure their satisfaction with our competing schools, to their satisfaction of students and parents of those other schools? The information would help us understand what the appeal of the other schools is that we need to consider.

Let's look at how we engage students, parents, and other customers by serving their needs and building relationships. How do we determine educational programming and other service offerings like counseling, health, extra-curricular activities, etc.? How do we determine student and parent needs and requirements and exceed the expectations of them, others, and the market segments? How do we identify and adapt program and service offerings to meet the requirements and exceed the expectations of students and other customers? Do we identify and adapt program and service offerings to enter new markets, to attract new students and other customers, and to create opportunities to expand relationships with current students, parents, and community?

An area that is vital to being *First Choice* is to examine how we enable student, parent, and other customer means for seeking information and support. How do students and others get information on our programs and services? How do we communicate the programs and services? We do communicate these, but what are all the means? Is there ever information that only district employees' children know, because mom or dad work for the district and know the system? Does that mean we are not communicating well enough?

How do we use information on students, others, and educational program and service offerings to identify current and anticipate future student and other customer groups and market segments (cyber, charter, private, etc.)? Do we consider competitors' students and others as well as other potential students and others in the segments? Do we determine which student and other groups and segments to emphasize and pursue for growth?

Finally, we need to figure out how we build relationships and manage complaints from our students and others. Do we market, build, and manage relationships with students and others to acquire students and other customers? How do we manage and enhance our image or brand? How do we engage with students and parents to retain students, meet their requirements, and exceed their expectations in each stage of their relationship with us? How do we engage our students and parents more? How do we resolve complaints promptly and effectively? How do we manage complaints so to recover our students' and parents' confidence, enhance their satisfaction and engagement, and avoid similar complaints in the future?

To be *First Choice* for our students, parents, the community, those looking for a community in the area, and those we would like to return to WASD, these questions need to be answered by putting processes and systems in place to address each one. Great schools and organizations can answer these questions, and can tell you how they perform these processes.

If WASD can build approaches to these types of concerns, we will be the *First Choice* of the region. The Ritz Carlton Hotel is considered world class. They built that reputation on customer service. Sure, we are a public school district, but we do have students, parents, the community, and other customers. Therefore, we can improve upon our customer service to achieve our mission and become *First Choice*.

Review for You

- What are WASD's two major focuses for the 2017/18 school year?
- Can you name the 10 focus points or themes for WASD this school year?

Events

- County Chorus at the high school November 9th.
- No School for Students on Friday, November 10th for Professional Development.
- Veterans Day is Saturday, November 11th. There are numerous programs this week throughout the school district.
- A two-hour delay for students on Tuesday, November 14th.
- The School Board meets on November 14th at 7PM.
- The end of the 1st Marking Period is November 15th.
- The mandatory parent meeting for winter sports will be held at 6:30 PM at the high school.

A Big Congrats

The Boys Cross Country Team was undefeated this season for the first time since 2001 and were the Colonial Division Champions. 'Way to go!

Sweater Collection for Veterans for Veterans Day

Two former WASD employees are leading the charge to collect sweaters for veterans. The event is being sponsored by Geisel Funeral Home, but Christy Freeman and Pat Heefner are collecting sweaters in the Waynesboro area. A black plastic bag is in each building office as a receptacle. If you have any sweaters you are not using, they can be donated to veterans of need. Pat Heefner will be around to collect the sweaters on Friday.

Piece of the Puzzle

- This week's Piece of the Puzzle is Jessica Heid. Staff at the middle school have noticed how hard Jessica works and how seriously she takes her position. She has made a noticeable impact on her students that others are making comments on that impact. Jessica is going above and beyond to make a difference for students. When you see Jessica, congratulate her for being the Piece of the Puzzle this week. Congratulations, Jessica!!

Review Answers

- Our Two Major Focuses for 2017/18
 - o Communication
 - o People (building relationships and partnerships)
- Ten Focus Points or Themes for 2017/18
 - o Communication, Relationships, Curriculum Development, Professional Development, Strategic, Integrity within Systems, Student-Centered, Fiscal Responsibility, Effective Quality of Staff, and Technology.

Final Thoughts

- *Your most unhappy customers are greatest source of learning.*—Bill Gates
- *No student walks into your school and says, “Dissatisfy me, please.” Aim for 100% satisfaction.*—based on Bill Quisang’s quote.
- *Get closer than ever to your customers. So close that you tell them what they need well before they realize it themselves.*—Steve Jobs
- *All of your customers are partners in your mission.*—Shep Hyken
- *Do what you do well they will want to see it again, and bring their friends.*—Walt Disney

Have a great rest of the week. Can you believe it is November, and we are in week 12? Enjoy the fall weekend.

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