

Our Path to First Choice No. 16

Everyone,

Here is Path Note No. 16. I hope you are doing well. Look for integration and linkages in this update. Hint—a value and an initiative.

Our Path Topic

Last week, we began examining how we build an effective and supportive workforce environment. We looked at capacity, capability, how we accomplish our work, how we assimilate new team members, change management, the work environment, and benefits and policies.

To complete our look at what we need to consider to be a First Choice workplace for our employees, we should explore how we engage our workforce to achieve a high-performance work environment. There is so much to this. That is why there is one Update devoted to it.

Trying to engage our team for the purpose of achieving high-performance work is much easier said than done. Building an effective organizational culture is critical. The first question to answer is how we foster an organization culture that has a clear foundation of open communication, high performance, and engaged team members. We need to put systems or processes into place that promotes diverse ideas, cultures, and thinking of our workforce. An environment of team member empowerment is a key ingredient to building such an organizational culture.

So, what engages our employees? It is important to understand those things that drive us. That is the first challenge. How do we determine what things motivate or drive our different work groups or segments?

Assessment is another crucial understanding we need. What formal and informal assessment methods and measures do we use to determine our workforce engagement and satisfaction? We need to make sure we know how the methods and measures differ across workforce groups and segments. One area that WASD has to consider is how we use indicators, such as retention, absenteeism, grievances, safety, and productivity, to assess and improve engagement?

WASD has to develop a workforce performance management system which has to support the high performance and workforce engagement. We need to consider workforce compensation, reward, recognition, and incentive practices. WASD also needs to consider how it will reinforce intelligent risk taking to achieve innovation, focus on students, other customers, and student learning, and achievement of our action plans.

Development of our workforce and management is a critical component to our success. Workforce management system support for high performance and workforce engagement must be in place. The system needs to address the organization's core competencies, strategic challenges, and achievement of short- and long-term action plans. The system must support WASD performance improvement, organizational change, and innovation, support ethics and ethical business practices, improve focus on students and other customers, ensure the transfer of knowledge from departing or retiring workforce members and ensure the reinforcement of new knowledge and skills on the job.

We have to understand how we evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of our learning and development system. We need to know how we correlate learning and development outcomes with findings from assessment of workforce engagement, and use these correlations to identify opportunities for improvement in both workforce engagement and learning and development offerings.

Finally, WASD must manage career progression. We need to manage career development for our people. We need to know how we carry out succession planning for management and leadership positions.

The Workforce considerations or criteria for an effective organization are involved, but, as you can read, very essential and critical to our success and vision to be First Choice for our employees, as well as our community.

Next week, we will start to look at our school operations. This one will also give you some new perspectives and areas we need to think about.

Board Meeting

The Board held a meeting last night. It was the reorganization meeting. The members are Steve Kulla (President), Karen Herald (VP), Steve O'Brien, Beth Reeher, Cindy Sullivan, Bonnie Bachtell, Curtis Wengert, Wendy Royer, and Pat McDonald. The Board heard a very detailed Budget Presentation, which you can find on the WASD website.

Review for You

- What is WASD's Values (what is important to WASD)?

Progress Report on two WASD Initiatives

- This year WASD has been exploring the possibility of Full Day Kindergarten or some other approach to improving our kindergarten program. Kindergarten teachers visited some current programs in other districts to learn what is being done and how things are executed. The Academic Committee has reviewed the topic and recommending putting the topic on a future agenda. We hope to finalize our research and make a recommendation in the next month due to having to plan for kindergarten registration if any changes are made.
- A taskforce exploring early childhood has been meeting throughout the school year. A survey was designed and deployed over the last few weeks. The results are being examined, and will provide the group with some data for driving the direction of WASD's approach to early childhood education. You can see the theme between the above bullet point and this one. Trying to provide students and their parents with the skills to become successful in school and in life is the mission. It can have a major impact on the entire school district's success over time. Early childhood education is also a Value of WASD.

Events

- Fairview Avenue and Hooverville Elementary Schools held their annual winter concerts last night. The word on the street is that the concerts were fantastic. We are fortunate to have such talented students and staff. Thank you for all your hard work.
- Thursday night, Summitview and Mowrey hold their winter concerts. Those concerts begin at 6:30 PM (SV) 7 PM (MW).

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Piece of the Puzzle

- This week's Piece of the Puzzle are a team/group of people. A big thank you to our WASD art teachers for their role in planning and facilitating the first annual WABEC Pass the Paintbrush Night on November 16th. Sara Breed, Betsy Morningstar, Beth Vassallo, Tricia Kireta, Jeff Murdorf, and Melanie Erb did an

outstanding job at this fun creative night for WASD families. Special thanks to WASD WABEC Board Members for their help in making this a successful event. Others to recognize are Cat Byers and Constante Paz.

When you see one of these folks, let them know they are a Piece of the Puzzle!!

Review Answers

- WASD's values are:
 - Students are unique and ability to learn
 - Provide a diverse curriculum
 - Research-based engaging teaching strategies
 - Use of Emerging Technology
 - Families are essential to student success
 - Early Childhood Education Preparation
 - Community Involvement
 - Our Schools are a place for everyone
 - A safe and secure environment

Final Thoughts on Workforce Development

- *We foster a culture of growing talent from within by providing training and development opportunities for our staff to better equip them for the challenges of today and readiness for tomorrow.—Jan Kincaid*
- *Developing talent is business's most important task—the sine qua non of competition in a knowledge economy.—Peter Drucker*
- *The only thing worse than training your employees and having them leave is not training them and having them stay.—Henry Ford*
- *An organization's ability to LEARN, and translate that learning into ACTION rapidly is the ultimate competitive advantage.—Jack Welch, former GE CEO*

Have a great rest of the week. Thank you for all you do each and every day!

Tod