

Our Path to First Choice  
Update No. 2

Everyone,

Here it is, week two already. The nice thing, you have a long weekend ahead. Happy Labor Day to our WASD family. First Choice Update No. 2!

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Our Path Topic

Last week we looked at the leadership structure of WASD. The structure is made up of the Clayton Team, Administrative Cabinet and the Principal Team. The terminology and such may take a little time to learn and for everyone to be consistent on the names (including myself!). Those teams are not the only leaders, but the administrative leadership. In the future, we will be looking at a Leadership Model for our district to use as a guide for direction and common approach for how we do things. More will come in the months to come.

This week's topic is our leadership philosophy. The leadership philosophy being ascribed here at WASD is Servant Leadership. Robert Greenleaf, a retired AT&T executive, began the leadership movement called: "Servant Leadership". Many believe it is the ideal leadership form that organizations should aspire. Warren Bennis, Max DePree, and Stephen Covey are among a few of the many that have written or spoken about servant leadership. It is the ascribed approach for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Corporation (Zohar, 1997). Many of the *Fortune* Magazine's annual listings of "The 100 Best Companies to Work For" espouse servant leadership and are practicing the approach throughout the organization.

Here are the servant leadership characteristics. The list is from Skip Pritchard's 9 Qualities of the Servant Leader.

1. Values diverse opinions
2. Cultivates a culture of trust
3. Develops other leaders
4. Helps people with life issues
5. Encourages
6. Sells instead of tells
7. Thinks you, not me.
8. Thinks long term.
9. Acts with humility

Larry Spears of the Spears Center in *The Journal of Virtues & Leadership* has identified 10 characteristics of Servant Leadership.

1. Listening
2. Empathy
3. Healing
4. Awareness

5. Persuasion
6. Conceptualization
7. Foresight
8. Stewardship
9. Commitment to the Growth of People
10. Building Community

As WASD moves forward this year, hopefully you will see servant leadership to be more and more evident in the district. The teacher, parent, community/business, technology, curriculum, realtor and other advisories that begin over the next year or two certainly are providing for some diverse opinions and perspectives of how WASD is operating. Surveying is another form of gathering opinions.

Survey results, and the sharing of those results, are a way to help build trust. Improving communication and transparency are both other ways to improve trust. Again, these are both areas WASD plans to increase in order to become a better organization, and to build trust.

Through the various advisories, the content leaders, and other means we hope to develop our leadership capacity in the district. Many of our folks can be leaders in different ways. You don't have to be a superintendent, principal or supervisor to lead. In the future, we hope to develop a succession plan. That plan will help everyone know how we develop leaders and people to be prepared to take over essential positions when people leave those positions.

One area that we need to learn to do a better job is to help people with life issues. How can we help our fellow WASD employee (team member) with the issues that they are dealing with in their life? How can we support that person? We need to be open to listening, and willing to see if we can help. We can help make the connections needed by our folks.

Certainly, as an organization aspiring to be an excellent performer, we have to encourage. Not only should we encourage our students to be successful in school and in the future, we need to encourage our fellow employees. As mentioned at the opening day for staff, we hope to have the school board change the last day from a full day to a partial day for students. After dismissal, have all staff, community leaders, and parent group leaders attend the celebration day/closing day. The purpose would be to recognize people for their successes, celebrate the achievements of the District and its team members, and communicate where the District is going from that point. This is a step toward encouraging.

A few of the other characteristics of servant leadership are sells instead of tells, thinks you, not me, and acts with humility are three that we have to adopt in our minds as best practices. Hopefully, with all we've done and talked about up to this point demonstrates a direction toward these three characteristics. But we still have much more to accomplish in those areas.

Finally, thinking long term is critical. At the Opening Day meeting we discussed the District's comprehensive plan and the ten focus points. I hope to discuss WASD's focus points in next week's First Choice Update. However, that was more for the current school year and the next couple of years for the

comprehensive plan. One thought provoking question asked the school board was “what does the year 2035 mean to the Board and all other WASD educators?” The date was elusive, but soon became very clear. A child born today will graduate in 2035 (in September will likely be 2036). As educators, no matter what your job is for WASD, you must start thinking about what a child needs to be prepared for in their future after graduation in 2035. Those students will likely work for 45, 50 years or more. If that is the case, they will retire about 2080-85, if not later. They will likely live into the 22<sup>nd</sup> Century. So what do we do to prepare these kids? What do they need to know? Thinking long-term is a characteristic of servant leadership.

Again, we have a long journey ahead to master servant leadership, but this is philosophy I have established as the form we will use at WASD.

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### Survey Results

Friday afternoon we received our results for the *First Day of School Survey*. We had 317 responses. That really isn't too bad considering we have 500-600 total employees. Below is an overview of the results. However, not every comment is listed due to many that are repeated.

- Did you have the materials needed to have a successful first day?
  - 92.7% Yes
  - 24 comments—Air conditioning and humidity issues, MimioView software concerns, some technology snags, some locker key issues, and some other issues.
- Was leadership supportive to your needs to provide a successful first day?
  - 98.1% Yes
  - 11 comments--Locker assignment and key issues, scheduling concerns, heat and humidity, getting materials earlier would have been helpful, short time to prep and in homeroom, and more consistent approaches in leadership decisions.
- Did the time schedule flow well enough for an effective day?
  - 91.5% Yes
  - No comments
- At any point, did you receive parent feedback from the first day experience of a student?
  - 84% No
  - 48 comments—many positive comments from parents, WAMS traffic congested, some kindergarten parents upset because they couldn't take their child back to the kindergarten classroom, some bus capacity concerns, some questions about Chromebooks and lunch money, and a child went home in tears.
- What is one thing that could have been done to make the day better?
  - 317 comments—air quality improvements, some cafeteria issues, a lot of positive remarks, some awkward lunch processes, some positives and negatives for the half day, traffic flow at secondary schools not good, longer home room periods, technology issues, transportation issues, more consistent communication between admin and teachers, parent night before school started was good but need more time to prepare,

many near-perfect days, MS key card issues, students struggled reading schedules and “Nothing really, but if you’re asking...Coffee”. Traffic congestion and room temperatures were probably the most responses to the question.

The survey was shared with the Clayton Team first, then the Administrative Cabinet, and the school board will also receive the survey results. With the results, administration will review all the responses and plan from there. As a team, we will focus on the top two or three issues for improvement next year. Currently, we are working on the technology issues, but there are still some final tasks at the middle school due to construction. As far as the traffic congestion, we are working with the Borough to hire fire police to direct the traffic at the middle school. It is not the best resolution, but it will help move the traffic along. Unfortunately, getting people to direct traffic every day and all school year has not necessarily been an easy task. Nevertheless, that is something we are continuing to work to accomplish.

### Technology Update

During the school board meeting last week, Nic Erickson was appointed Director of Technology. In last week’s First Choice Update you read that he is part of the Clayton Team. Technology is a critical piece of most organizations today, so it is important that the leader of that division is part of the communication and direction. That department impacts every other department in the district. Nic has served the District well, and we believe the department has flourished under his leadership.

The Technology Department has implemented the Access 4 All program with the middle school, new technology throughout the District, and so much more over the summer. It is a critical part of what we do as a school district.

### Piece of the Puzzle

### A Lot Going On

There are a lot of events going on at this time in our schools...sporting events galore. Friday night, the high school football team takes on Red Lion Area SD, 7 PM at home. The Boys Soccer Varsity Team will be at a Central York tournament on Saturday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Golf Team will be at Chambersburg, 2 PM on the 31<sup>st</sup>. The Cross Country Team will be meeting on Tuesday, September 5<sup>th</sup> at JB High School for the Tri-Meet. If I missed a group, I apologize. These were the only ones on my list.

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### Final Thoughts

*“The future of the world is in my classroom today”.* Ivan Welton Fitzwater

*“The investment in knowledge pays the best interest”.* Benjamin Franklin

*“Tell me, and I’ll forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will learn.”* Benjamin Franklin

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Thanks for a great week, everyone!  
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