

Our Path to First Choice
Update No. 3

Everyone,

Hopefully you had a great Labor Day holiday. Back to what we do best...the work of providing the First Choice in Education for the community's children. Here is Update No. 3.

Our Path Topic

This week's topic will cover the ten (10) themes or focus points (goals) that WASD is working to accomplish during the 2017/18 school year. These are not in a particular order.

The first focus or goal is Communication. An area that seems to have come out in the WASD Comprehensive Plan was a concern to "Increase communication within stakeholders." The first day for staff was the first example of working toward that goal. Having an opening day for all stakeholders to hear the direction and plans for the organization is a communication practice. We hope to have one at the end of the year to share what WASD has accomplished. Also, this year, these Our Path to First Choice Updates are another example. These are not the greatest approaches, but the purpose is to communicate some important upcoming events and to share important messages on where WASD is going. The school board is receiving weekly information about what occurred throughout the week, and other documents that will help them to discern various upcoming items. The leadership structure set up in WASD is another form of communication through various meetings and chain of command. These approaches provide clearer and more consistent messages than organizations that do not use such structures. Finally, WASD plans to create a Communication Plan. The plan will provide some action plans for improving and establishing good communication practices.

Relationships is another focus point. WASD is working to build community partnerships. We have started creating more communication between WASD and the borough and other organizations this year...including the local daycare businesses. More on that later. In addition, WASD is working to improve working relationships between school board, administration and staff. We are all team members trying to accomplish the same goals, so it is imperative we work and feel like a team. *Our First Day Survey* and the *Are We Making Progress Survey* are just the beginning of listening to staff to build a better relationship. There is a lot to accomplish in our relationship focus point, but it is a critical one. Although this goal is not directly connected with our Comprehensive Plan, it is crucial to our success.

Curriculum Development is the third focus point. We will be still doing walk-throughs, but we plan to change the purpose over time. As our walk-throughs evolve, we plan to have them focus on gathering data in areas as Higher-order thinking, Engaged learning, Authentic learning and Technology (HEAT). Stay tuned for more of that. These all touch upon our vision, values, concerns, etc. of the Comprehensive Plan.

Another focus point is Professional Development (PD). This is one we hope to prepare a more in-depth plan, and provide staff surveys for building that plan. Over time, we hope to develop a plan for parent PD. If you look at the Comprehensive Plan, you will find Parent education on assessments and educational programming, research-based teaching strategies, a systemic challenge of PD with Fidelity and a system of effective teaching. Those all could be included in a plan for PD.

Being Strategic is listed as a focus point. This one is more about being focused on systems, processes, results, and planning. As we develop plans and cycles and complete them, we hope to accomplish more. The use of Ticket Systems and Processes assure for better communication, completion of cycle, and alignment. This is an area that all will benefit from by doing. This is also a more long-term goal. To be strategic and systematic with planning and processes is time intensive.

Integrity with Systems is another area we are working to improve. Transparency, ethics, surveys, tracking data, and fidelity checks are all ways we can demonstrate integrity with systems. Following through with technology and maintenance ticket systems surely provide examples of such systems. We are starting to witness some benefits from using that system with integrity. The tracking of completed and outstanding tickets is helping us follow progress or lack of progress. Our *First Day Surveys* are providing very helpful information. However, sharing the results with all of our organization's team members is progress toward transparency. Part of being safe and secure is transparency.

Being Student-centered is a focus point. We are doing various things to accomplish this. One is through focus group (advisory groups). The Teacher Advisory is focused on student learning. How can we improve what we do for students? That is a question that the advisory will focus on to improve student achievement. The Parent Advisory will focus on how we can improve student experiences in school. The high school will be providing an annual Climate Survey to their students to learn more about how we can improve their experiences at WASD. These are only a few examples, but they provide evidence of being student-focused. It also fits with our value of students being unique with the ability to learn.

WASD is working to be fiscally responsible. Consequently, we have no choice than to be fiscally responsible. As we plan our budget, the ticket systems, and trying to have 70% of our budget have more of a direct impact on the classroom are just a few ways we are trying to accomplish this goal. Looking at the numbers of haves and have-nots is another way. This last one certainly will fall into our Comp Plan Concern for analyzing data. With such data, ongoing analysis of District needs will provide for spending smarter. This will be accomplished as we become more strategic in our planning.

Developing an Effective Quality of Staff is another critical focus point. It aligns with our Comp Plan for professional development, more strategic instruction and developing a system for effective instruction. Continuing to use the Danielson Model, the HEAT data, improving our hiring and orientation practices, and recognition of employees as the Piece of the Puzzle and our proposed change in the last day of school—our Celebration Day are part of achieving the development of an effective quality of staff.

Finally, Technology is a major Focus Point for WASD. This year, a plan for implementing the *Access 4 All* program was approved. The program will witness Chromebook devices being provided to each student from 6th to 12th Grade over the next few years. The 2017/18 school year is seeing the middle school

students realize this goal. Nic Erickson will be starting a Technology Advisory this year for the purpose of getting feedback and providing the technology department some guidance as WASD moves forward in the world of 21st Century Technology. Throughout the Comp Plan you will find references to technology. Technology for Achievement and the Use of Emerging Technology clearly align with this focus point.

At the end of the school year, we hope to share the accomplishments and achievements made with these focus points. Many have started and are currently being developed, and many are yet to come. Nevertheless, WASD is moving more strategically toward having clear plans, goals and targets for achieving progress over time. As WASD progresses, so do students. And, they are the reason we are here.

Next week we will take a look at our WASD Comprehensive Plan (CP). It should make more sense of our direction and focus points as you learn more about the CP. Although I am not a big fan of how the State expects a district to use the CP, it does provide a place to start.

Reminder

There is a 2-hour delay for students on September 19th. The purpose of the delay is for data study.

Classroom Phone Update

All building classroom phones have been updated to Voice-over IP. The only building not updated is Fairview Avenue. Although last, you are not forgotten. The VoIP phone completion is expected late October or early November for Fairview.

This Week's Events

The MS's Parent Forum is meeting the 18th, SV's Race for Education is the 13th, the next school board meeting is the 12th, and the HS football game is home this Friday night against Lancaster Catholic HS.

Piece of the Puzzle

This week Randy Fogle was highly nominated as the Piece of the Puzzle. Randy continually supports the District through staffing, cleaning and meeting the needs and expectations of our staff. He continually responds to issues and problems, regardless of the time of day. He is one of the major reasons why our buildings are ready for students and staff at the beginning of the new school year. Furthermore, everyone knows he will step up to take on anything that anyone asks. 'Way to go, Randy! If you see him, congratulate him.

Final Thoughts

Effort and courage are not enough without purpose and direction. John F. Kennedy

The good life is a process, it is not a state of being. It is a direction. Not a destination. Carl Rogers

The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future in life. Plato

Trust gives you the permission to give people direction, get everyone aligned, and give them the energy to go get the job done. Trust enables you to execute with excellence and produce extraordinary results. As you execute with excellence and deliver on your commitments, trust becomes easier to inspire, creating a flywheel of performance. Douglas Conant