

Our Path to First Choice No. 30

Everyone,

Here is Path Note No. 30. I apologize for the delay.

Our Path Topic

There will likely be about 40 Path Updates this year. Being 75% through, in this week's Path Update, let's look at our 10 Focus Points and two major objectives for progress so far this year. The path to *First Choice* is long and arduous, and will take years, but we are taking small slow steps toward our objectives.

Communication and Relationships have been our two biggest focus points. These are far from where they need to be, but we have been making progress.

Communication—WASD has been utilizing more surveys to acquire feedback in various areas. There have been surveys for technology, substitutes, parents, staff, and general surveys. WASD had much communication over the years, but it was mostly one-way communication. To improve, WASD needed to increase two-way communication forms. Surveys are an example of one type of two-way communication. A communication team has been developed for the purpose of improving WASD communication with all stakeholders. It is in the process of inviting stakeholders to join the team, doing a communication inventory, and developing a survey for feedback. Another communication area that has been in use are Advisory Meetings. Advisories are teams of people that represent a group of stakeholders advising for a common purpose. The advisories have included a teacher advisory, support staff advisory, PTO President Advisory, Realtor Advisory, Special Education Advisory, Technology Advisory, and a few others. Next year, a few more will be formed. These advisories work as communication and feedback, but also a way to build relationships—the other major focus for WASD.

Relationships—as mentioned, the advisory groups model is a form of communication. It is a type of focus group that is specifically set up to work with certain stakeholders. At the same time as communicating, it is a way to build relationships and build trust. The dialogue needs to be open and honest, but not contentious. Very tough conversations can occur, but can still be civil. It is an advisory, so not everything will be completed, but it is a way to be heard and to build relationships. Another area of improvement in the relationship area is the establishment of Exit Interviews. Exit Interviews are used to gather information about an employee's experience with the organization. Information is recorded and kept to examine and learn ways to improve in relationships, work processes, and more. WASD has also been working to improve and increase partnerships and collaborations. Those forms of relationships have been through being more involved with the community's different organizations as Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Renfrew Museum, Alexander Hamilton Library, the boroughs and townships, county government, and others. Good partners know what each other's organization's goals and values, and help work to achieve them.

These are by no means the only accomplishments, but a start. Next week, we'll continue to look at our achievements for the 2018/19 school year. With only two and a half months to go in the school year, there is still time to accomplish more.

Please remember, *First Choice* is not "Every Choice", but the end result for a student and the overall belief of all other stakeholders. It will come with some sacrifice and hard work, but truly worth the effort in the end. The Path will take years, so please be patient as we continue to work for *First Choice*.

Review for You

- Do you remember hearing about an OFI? What is an OFI?

Events

- Reminder—March 30th there is no school due to the Good Friday holiday.

Piece of the Puzzle

- This week's Piece of the Puzzle is Jay Stevens. Jay has worked in the WASD cafeteria for 24 years after being hired in January of 1984. His colleagues describe him as dependable, caring, kind, and always willing to help others. Jay has worked with many different employees, mostly female, and has survived. When Summitview serves its Easter Holiday meal in March it will be the 100th holiday meal Jay helped to prepare. Jay is a great asset to our WASD staff and we are happy that he chose to spend the last 34 years working here. Congratulations, Jay! If you see Jay today, give him a big kudos.

Review Answers

- An OFI is an Opportunity for Improvement. The point of such an innocuous acronym is the fact that it is certainly more positive than "weakness", "flaw", etc. We all have OFIs, and always will. WASD has OFIs, and always will. The point is to continue to work on OFIs in order to assure ongoing improvement.

Final Thoughts

- *A bad system will beat a good person every time.*—D. Edward Deming
- *Strive for continuous improvement, instead of perfection.*—Kim Collins
- *The biggest room in the world is the room for improvement.*—Helmut Schmidt
- *We need people to give us feedback. That's how we improve.*—Bill Gates
- *An incident is just the tip of the iceberg, a sign of a much larger problem below the surface.*—Don Brown.
- *Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.*—Henry Ford.
- *The difference between setting a goal and achieving it is in having a good plan and working it.*—Les Brown.
- *Continuous improvement causes us to think about upstream process not downstream damage control.*—
- *When you're finished Changing...you're finished.*—Benjamin Franklin

Have a great rest of the week. Spring is here, but thought warmer weather was on its way. Take care!