

Our Path to First Choice No. 31

Everyone,

Here is Path Note No. 31. I know March is a cranky time of the year for all of us, but remember that warmer and brighter days do lie ahead.

Our Path Topic

Last week we looked at the progress made so far with our two major focuses for the 2017/18 school year. All of the focus points are part of Our Path to First Choice. As mentioned before, the Path will take years. Research will show that it takes 7 to 10 years to change an organization. Nevertheless, it is worth the patience.

As stated last week, First Choice is not one's only choice or every choice, but the end result of a child's education with WASD. Did he/she get their first choice after graduating? It doesn't mean that every student gets everything they wish. It will depend on how things fit into the alignment of the student's end goal. It is also the same for parents, staff, and community. It is more of an overall belief. We can't get everything we want. We can't at Wal-Mart.

The other focus points are Curriculum Development, Professional Development, Being More Strategic, Integrity within Systems, Student-Centered, Fiscal Responsibility, Effective Quality of Staff, and Technology Focus.

With Curriculum Development, WASD has implemented a Comprehensive Kindergarten Program, a Curriculum Advisory was established, a plan for the Career Readiness requirements, and a K12 Computer Science approach.

In Professional Development, WASD team sent to the Mid Atlantic Conference on Personalized Learning, Google trained trainers, team of teachers and administrators to Best Practices in Math Instruction, team to TDA training and Text and Evidence Based Writing, and various other trainings within the District.

In Being More Strategic this year, we have a direction. We have ten focus points; although too many, but we have focus points. We are beginning to use Measurement for more than just test scores. We have a Leadership Model that is ready for use, but not in place for complete use, yet. However, it is being used in some instances. Also, we are developing the various steps needed to improve our strategic planning process on an annual basis. A Superintendent Entry Plan was submitted to the Board of Directors this year. A program/course approval process and a policy approval process were both established.

WASD is working to improve transparency. The school board receives information upon information on decision making and plans. We are using surveys and advisories to share our information and collect information. We are working to track data through various other entities as Fountas and Pinnell, Exact Path, CDTs, Career Cruising, Spending on Athletics, and more. We have set up basic ALICE training, videos, and updated the Emergency Management Plan. Additionally, the WASD Safety Committee is taking on the additional responsibility of overseeing school safety and security. With the various stakeholders on the team, more voices are being heard, and more know what is going on with safety.

The Early Childhood Initiative, Comprehensive Kindergarten, Pre-school relationships, Head Start relationship, Next Step transition event, the work toward First Choice are all Student-centered focused. The more we focus on clear evidence of achievement, the more student-centered we become.

The District has started multi-year financial projections, facility needs projections of 5 to 20 years, and bi-weekly budget meetings are all evidence of working toward our focus on Fiscal Responsibility. Being more strategic is also another way to be more fiscally responsible.

As far as Effective Quality of Staff, WASD is always trying to improve our evaluation of staff systems, improve working conditions and other areas that impact getting and maintaining quality of staff. In addition, surveys, advisories, and professional development are also tools we are using to try to improve our effectiveness and quality.

Finally, Technology. This year we have implemented Access4All at the middle school. Next year, the Access4All program will move to the high school. A Technology Advisory has been established to help with direction and communication, and technology surveys have been utilized to gather feedback for making improvements. One final note, members of the Technology advisory were able to attend the state technology conference in Hershey to help build capacity of our vision and future with technology at WASD.

As you can see, there has been progress, and not all was mentioned. However, we are moving down Our Path. But we have a long trail to trek.

Review for You

- What is Strategic Planning?

Events

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

Board Meeting

- The Board held a meeting last night. A couple of items for noting.
 - The high school will be implementing random use of its metal detector. WASHS has a metal detector in the building used for STRIVE over the last few years. However, it was recommended to use randomly to help increase security. The data from the high school students' feedback on March 14 showed an interest for metal detectors.
 - The March 21st snow day will be rescheduled as an Act 80 Day on May 29th. The 30th is a teacher day, and the 31st is the 187th day.
 - The Board also approved the Principles for Governance & Leadership. These will be on our District website soon, so please check them out if you would like to learn more.
 - A coach's handbook was approved by the Board for use in the Athletic Department.

Another Article

- Attached. Where Do We Go from Here?

Piece of the Puzzle

- This week's Pieces of the Puzzle are Ken Carlson and Mary Fleagle. These two folks produced a wonderful play at the middle school that was so well received. The hours and planning that goes into staging such an event are countless. The impact will be remembered by students for a lifetime. When you see Mary and Ken, congratulate them for being the Pieces of the Puzzle.

Review Answers

- Strategic Planning is an organization's process for defining direction and making decisions on use of resources in order to pursue its strategy. It is Vision—where are we going?, Mission—what is it we do?, Values—what is important to us?, and Strategy (how are we going to accomplish our vision in order to achieve our mission?)

Final Thoughts

- *Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.*—Alan Larkin.
- *Strategy is not the consequence of planning, but the opposite: it's the starting point.*—Henry Mintzberg.
- *Strategic Planning is worthless-unless there is first a strategic vision.*—John Naisbitt
- *Strategy without process is little more than a wish list.*—Robert Filek
- *Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.*—Ben Franklin

Have a great rest of the week. Happy long weekend. Take care!
Tod