

Our Path to First Choice No. 34

Everyone,

Here is Path Note No. 34. PSSA Testing goes on...and on...and on. Hang in there. Next month is May.

Our Path Topic

One major initiative that has been put in place this year and getting some traction is Early Childhood Education. Last Spring, Barb Martin, Hooverville Principal, submitting a grant for \$143,000 to fund an additional pre-school program. The grant program was called the P3 Initiative. P3 stands for Pre-Natal to 3rd Grade. The purpose is to provide more quality childcare for young children whose parents cannot afford such opportunities.

Waynesboro has over 600 children that qualify. Only 91 of those children attended a program of five classes. Thirty-four of those kids were as a result of the P3 Grant. So, over 500 children qualify for such classes, but do not have the means to attend, or the parents choose not to send them.

Head Start is also a provider for children from low income families to help provide a comprehensive Birth to five years old program. This year, a strong relationship and collaboration has been built between the Franklin County Head Start Program and the Waynesboro Area School District (WASD). In addition, a stronger partnership and collaboration has been developed between WASD and some of the pre-schools and childcare providers in the Waynesboro area. The Waynesboro Day Care, The Waynesboro YMCA, and others have been attending meetings with WASD for the P3 Initiative. We hope to continue to work with more and more of our community's pre-schools and day cares over time.

Through our P3 Initiative relationships with Head Start, Summit Health, County Commissioners, and the business sector, another group has been formed to continue the work WASD is doing, but at a county level. Head Start is working to put additional classes in the Waynesboro area over the next year in order to serve more children and families, begin to reach more of those 500+ kids that are not getting the high quality childcare needed to be successful in their future.

Waynesboro's early childhood initiative has gotten the attention of the county. With those mentioned above taking part in the P3 meetings, leaders have started an Early Childhood Education and Family Policy Team for Franklin County. Although the group has not been officially named, yet, this is the referenced name being used up to this point. The purpose of the group is to look at county and state policies, laws, and programming to examine ways to improve development and health opportunities for pre-natal and newborn children and parents. This has been well received by the State of Pennsylvania so much that The Secretary of OCDEL—Office of Child Development and Early Learning (Deputy Secretary of Human Services) attended the most recent meeting. The Deputy Secretary stated that PA is watching Franklin County, and will be contacting the county to help other counties get started on these initiatives for improving parent and child success in education.

WASD is applying for a larger amount of grant money this year in order to offer five (5) additional classes for qualifying children and families. Between the WASD P3 grant and Head Start, the Waynesboro area should see a couple hundred more students have access to high quality childcare and development opportunities. Early Childhood Education from pre-natal to five is an area of need getting more and

more attention by criminologists, politicians, the medical field, and business. It is about time that education looks at the research and starts to get involved.

If we work to assist our prenatal to five years old children and parents to have a quality early childhood experience whether at home or in a daycare/pre-school, research shows that these children will be more successful in school and life. By focusing on changing the community's culture to be more focused on early childhood experiences, our students and schools will see more success in the future.

Review for You

- What partnerships, collaborations, and relationships have been built through WASD's P3 Initiative?

Events

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Piece of the Puzzle

- This week, Summitview Principal, Dr. Diane McCallum has been nominated for the Piece of the Puzzle. Diane has done an amazing job as a first year principal. She has been instrumental in introducing numerous key improvements to Summitview Elementary. In addition to taking the lead role of the WASD Communication Team and servicing all the ELL elementary students, Diane is the Coordinator of WASD's Franklin Virtual Academy cyber school program. Just recently, she did an outstanding job at presenting to the WASD School Board about the impact cyber education has on public education. If you see Dr. McCallum, congratulate her for being the Piece of the Puzzle this week.

Review Answers

- The P3 Initiative has developed partnerships, collaborations, and relationships with daycares, pre-schools, Head Start of Franklin County, Bob Thomas (Franklin County Commissioner), Mike Ross (CEO of Franklin County Business Development Corporation), Summit Health, retired teachers, United Way, the YMCA, and many others. The relationships are establishing support and access to many resources to help move the initiative.

Final Thoughts

- *The first five years have so much to do with how the next 80 turnout.*—Bill Gates
- *We see how early childhood experiences are so important to lifelong outcomes, how the early environment literally becomes embedded in the brain and changes its architecture.*—Andrew S. Garner
- *The goal of Early Childhood Education should be to activate the child's own natural desire to learn.*—Maria Montessori
- *The best way to predict your future is to create it.*—Abraham Lincoln
- *Early childhood education begins early, even before birth.*—Madeleine M. Kunin
- *Without a High-Quality Early Education, At-risk children are:*
 - *25% more likely to drop out of school*
 - *40% more likely to become a teen parent*

- *50% more likely to be placed in special education*
- *60% more likely to never attend college*
- *70% more likely to be arrested for a violent crime.*

Have a great rest of the week. About five more weeks of school left to the school year. Wow, hard to believe.

Tod