

## Our Path to First Choice Update No. 37

Everyone,

Here is Path Note No. 37. May is here, and the weather is slowly breaking into a more temperate climate. Believe it or not, there will only be three more First Choice Updates remaining for this school year. No. 40 will be sent out on May 30.

**Happy Teacher Appreciation Week!** Thank you for all you do. This is not just to our teachers, but our whole team. Everyone at WASD is an educator, and your contribution is critical to our success!

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### Our Path Topic

As you know, our two top WASD Focus Points this year have been Relationships and Communication. We have made some strides in both areas this year, but with much more to be accomplished. Nevertheless, let's look at organizational communication and what we have accomplished this year, so far. Although communication is never perfect in any organization and can always be improved, ongoing work to make it more effective should be the common practice.

It's been said that communication strengthens teams and organizations, inspires high performance and improves the workplace culture. Effective communication, according to some business experts, builds and maintains relationships, facilitates innovation, builds an effective team, manages employees, contributes growth of the organization, and ensures transparency. So, how do these work?

Communication is a key process in building relationships. It constructs and fosters productive relationships by maintaining positive encounters with others. Innovation is facilitated by promoting an open environment for communicating new ideas. Good communication within a team can boost employee morale and improve work ethic if staff are reminded of achievements and feel that they are working towards a common goal. Managing employees is more effective with good communication. Communicating expectations, giving constructive feedback, building better relationships, and understanding personal goals that employees may wish to work towards are all good practices. Communication can help grow your organization by leading to productivity and avoiding unnecessary delays in the implementation of policies and new initiatives. In addition, establishing a clear leadership structure that defines the divisions and departments of the organization and its leaders of those areas assists in the down-the-chain communication to all staff and up-the-chain communication to the leadership. Finally, regular internal and external communication helps maintain transparency. It can build the trust of your staff and stakeholders.

What are some effective Communication Methods? Listening, speaking, written and nonverbal. Meeting people in person, having internal communications, increasing employee knowledge about how the organization works, recognizing employees, and involving staff in decision making.

What have we done in WASD this year to improve communication? First of all, WASD has a clear leadership structure. There is the Clayton Team for disseminating information through curriculum & instruction, business department, pupil services, technology, and the Board and external stakeholders. It has an administrative cabinet that shares information to be disseminated and updates

of initiative progress. There are department and other area meetings for principals, food service, transportation, buildings & grounds, technology, special education, content areas, building faculty meetings, etc. WASD has a Leadership Model for communicating how to approach ongoing improvement. Although it has been somewhat deployed, it is not implemented, yet. That will come next year. The model is part of the leadership structure.

This year, WASD has created advisories for teachers, PTO Presidents (parents), realtors, technology, curriculum and instruction, special education parents, and support staff...with a few to come next year. A community roundtable has been established with all of the different school district communities to share information and build better relationships with the District. These forms of two-way communication also work as focus groups for sharing information and soliciting feedback.

Surveys have had a larger presence this year in WASD. There are many more to come in the future, but there are considerable more now than before the 2017/18 school year. The survey data will provide administrators and others more information as decisions and plans are needed to be made. Examples of the surveys sent out this year are: Are We Making Progress?, New Teacher Survey, Partnership Survey, and Substitute Teacher Survey to only name a few.

The WASD Communication Team has been established this year. The team has developed a Communication Inventory. The inventory includes many aspects of what communications WASD has in place now. It determines what we are doing at this time. It also shows the gaps of what we are not doing. In addition, the team has developed staff and parent surveys to be deployed in the near future. What the inventory and surveys do is establish where WASD is at when it comes to communication. It also is helping the team establish the needs of WASD stakeholders. If you recall, the first step of the WASD Leadership Model is to determine the needs of the stakeholders. Once the team has the survey results and the inventory completed, the information will help determine what direction to go and to plan for to improve WASD communication one step at a time.

Communication may have been a focus point for WASD this school year, but that doesn't mean we will not continue working to improve in this area. Additional advisories, partnerships, relationship building, surveys, and other approaches will be implemented to improve our communication over time. Please be patient as we work to get better, but with your help we will improve.

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### Events

- A Board meeting was held this week.
- The high school Spring Choir Concert is on Thursday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM.
- The 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Orientation Program at the middle school is Monday, May 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM.
- The high school prom is Saturday, May 12 at 7 PM.
- There is a Two-Hour Delay for students on Tuesday, May 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Middle school Spring Concert, Tuesday, May 15<sup>th</sup> at 7PM.
- The high school Awards Program is Thursday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM.
- Graduation is on Friday, May 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM.
- The last day of school for students is May 25<sup>th</sup>.
- Schools are closed on Memorial Day—Monday, May 28<sup>th</sup>.

- June 15<sup>th</sup>—Nationally-renown Early Childhood speaker at the Capitol Theatre (see below announcement). The topic is “The Science behind Early Childhood Education for Children and Families”. It is a free event.

#### Review for You

- What is effective communication?

#### **\*\*Important Information and Request**

- The Waynesboro Rotary Club is looking for a host family for an exchange student for the 2018/19 school year. If you or anyone you would know would be interested please let me know. Also, please spread the word! Thanks.

#### **Do You Want to Handout Your Child’s Diploma at Graduation?**

- This year, WASD is giving the opportunity for WASD staff members to hand out the diploma to their son/daughter who is graduating this year. If you have a child graduating this year (2018) and would like to hand his/her diploma, please notify Ruth Berger by May 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### Piece of the Puzzle

- This week, we will start to have more than one nomination for the Piece of the Puzzle. So many of our staff do great things for our kids, the organization, and for their fellow WASD team members. Let’s congratulate these folks for going that extra mile.
- Aaron Burke has been nominated this week as a Piece of the Puzzle. Aaron coached the Girls Varsity Softball Team to an improved 5-1 record on the year after coming back from an 11-1 deficit in the 4<sup>th</sup> inning against Big Springs at a home game to win 17-16. The team learned to never give up and keep playing until the final play no matter how big the challenge may be. Between the frigid weather, rain, long bus trips, and even snow, Aaron’s team had found itself a playoff contender. If you see Aaron, make sure you give him a big kudos for being a piece of the puzzle this week.
- Congratulate Shannon Browning, the Senior High School Kitchen Manager and the High School Kitchen Staff. Shannon manages the largest kitchen in the District. She is the WASD food service menu guru. Shannon makes sure that all the District monthly menus are in nutritional compliance. She along with her staff have other functions such as luncheons and dinners as well as the daily breakfast and lunch menu to prepare and serve. The food service staff at WASHS are always ready and willing to undertake any task or new idea to improve food service for their students. If you see Shannon or one of the WASHS cafeteria staff members, be sure to congratulate them on being a piece of the puzzle.

#### Review Answers

- Communication is vital to an organization’s success. Communication strengthens teams and organizations, inspires high performance and improves the workplace culture. Effective communication, according to some business experts, builds and maintains relationships, facilitates innovation, builds an effective team, manages employees, contributes growth of the organization, and ensures transparency.

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## Final Thoughts

- *Effective communication is 20% what you know and 80% how you feel about what you know.*—Jim Rohn.
- *The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.*—George Benard Shaw.
- *Good design is about effective communication, not decoration at the expense of legibility.*—Vitaly Friendman.
- *To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others.*—Tony Robbins.
- *You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can't get them across, your ideas won't get you anywhere.*—Lee Iacocca.
- *The effectiveness of communication is not defined by the communication, but by the response.*—Milton Erickson.
- *Seek first to understand, then to be understood.*—Stephen R. Covey.
- *Communication-It's the first thing we really learn in life. Funny thing is, once we grow up, learn our words and really start talking, the harder it becomes to know what to say. Or how to ask for what we really need.*—Meredith Grey.
- *Trust is the glue of life. It's the most essential ingredient in effective communication. It's the principle that holds all relationship.*—Stephen R. Covey.

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Have a great rest of the week.  
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