

## Our Path to First Choice Update No. 38

Everyone,

Here is Path Note No 38. Testing continues, but near the end. Never seems to go away.

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### Our Path Topic

Many people talk about morale in the work place. In the military, morale is always considered. When soldiers are in a war situation and it continues for so long, it can be devastatingly dispiriting and understated. In the workplace it may seem the same, but likely and realistically, a little different.

Employees are probably more responsible for their own morale, but employers are more responsible for the climate of the workplace. Let's look at working conditions for the workplace.

To have good working conditions for creating a positive climate the following are often mentioned.

- **Transparent and Open Communication**—two-way communication is a great tool for addressing employee concerns and frustrations.
- **Work-Life Balance**—workaholics need to be careful and employers need to notice. Burning the midnight oil at both ends of the candle can burnout people.
- **Focused Training & Professional Development**—ongoing training in areas employees need is dire. Both employer and employee driven ideas are a great way to improve working conditions; let alone, improve and develop the employee and the organization.
- **Recognition for Hard Work**—we give kids positive reinforcement, so why don't we do this in education? Business does it, but rarely in education.

A few other things experts recommend are for the employer and employee **to be more flexible**. It starts with the employer to lead the way. **Build trust** is another area that will improve the climate. Communication, openness and building personal connections all help. **Give and receive feedback**. This does not mean hammer each other, but honest and open feedback. Employers can start this with focus groups and surveys. Finally, **provide a sense of purpose**. For schools, we do have a sense of purpose, but we need to continue to build and promote that purpose so our students, parents, community and all employees realize that same drive for our success.

Although WASD is not perfect at these and has a long, long way to go, we are working to improve these areas. Hopefully over time, WASD employees (team members) will find WASD as a working climate that may be what is best for each of us; therefore, being our *First Choice*.

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### Review for You

- Is the employer responsible for employee morale?

### Piece of the Puzzle

- We have had a number of nominations for the Piece of the Puzzle. Over the last weeks of school, we will recognize a few additional folks. WASD has a fantastic team of people,

and we are very lucky and grateful. This week, we are recognizing Mrs. Emily Goodine, the principal of Mowrey Elementary School. Some of her staff members have recommended Emily for creating a positive environment that is welcoming to everyone. She has created a sense of pride in all of the students, faculty, staff, and parents. Her #mwmustangpride and #mwlearners are used daily and she makes it a point to post pictures and updates of Mowrey students and staff that are accomplishing great things in and out of school. She orchestrated a scavenger hunt on academic night which got everyone involved and encouraged students and parents to travel all over the school to answer thought-provoking and mathematical questions pertaining to student work that was displayed.

- Denise McCleaf has been nominated a Piece of the Puzzle. Denise and her students have put together an amazing night for WASHS special needs students. On April 21<sup>st</sup>, Denise and the Jr. Civitan students held a PROM for special need students. The students had a blast and the parents were so thankful that someone thought enough about their children to put together a dance just for them.
- Congratulate both Emily and Denise for being a Piece of the Puzzle.

### Review Answers

- The employer is not likely responsible for an employee's morale. However, the employer can help the employee with his/her morale by creating a climate that promotes a more positive morale.

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### Final Thoughts

- *A good director creates an environment, which gives the actor the encouragement to fly.—Kevin Bacon.*
- *One of the benefits of creating a great work environment is its effect on retaining highly valued workers. This is an opportunity for an organization to reward its leader and also create a unique employment benefit that can help the nonprofit retain that leader.—Adam Goodman*
- *People who work in an environment where doing their best is recognized have a better chance of feeling good about their work.—Marilyn Suttle*
- *Our environment, the world in which we live and work, is a mirror of our attitudes and expectations.—Earl Nightingale*
- *What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.—Jane Goodall*

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The clock is ticking, and the school year is coming to an end. Have a great rest of the week.  
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