

Our Path to First Choice
Update No. 7

Everyone,

I hope you've had a great week so far. Here is Our Path's Update No. 7. Enjoy the rest of the week.

Our Path Topic

Let's review a little bit this week, and look back on what, if any, accomplishments we've made so far this school year. If we look at our goals and 10 Themes for the year, we may be able to see if we are making any progress.

One of WASD's vision statements promotes a connection between school and career. This is the First Choice vision. Although we are nowhere near achieving any part of that vision, we are beginning the meetings and continuing to communicate the vision. Initial meetings will begin over the next quarter that will examine what First Choice means to WASD, and how we will approach it. As those meetings begin to occur, the progress will be noted in future Path updates.

Technology is one of our Ten Focus Points or Themes for 2017/18. It is also listed as something WASD values and has listed as a concern in its Comprehensive Plan. Technology is listed to be a systemic challenge. To date, the middle school has implemented its Access4All program with grades 6th through 8th. Additional devices have been implemented, including teacher devices. There are still more devices to deploy, but the year has been moving along in this area. A couple of things on the horizon for Technology are a Technology Advisory (to review concerns and communicate where our tech program is heading) and exploring possible survey programs to help understand what we have and what issues we face in technology. In addition, we are exploring student-led help desks to respond to student and staff needs for their Chromebooks.

WASD has started to develop an Early Childhood Program. Basically, the District received a \$144,000 grant to work closely with a preschool program in the community. The grant has opened over 30 spots for children that would not have had the means for preschool. The programs are through the Waynesboro Day Care and Head Start. In addition, we have started a P-3 Initiative. That program is working from prenatal to 3rd grade with children. WASD is working to develop a better relationship and improve communication with all the local day cares and preschools, including Head Start. The purpose is to better prepare children with the skills needed to be school ready. The idea is to help reach those parents we do not normally reach, and provide them with the skills to help their children be more successful in school and life. Early Childhood Education Preparation is one of our WASD Values. Seguing to kindergarten, Dr. Sterner-Hine has started to meet with WASD kindergarten teachers to look at our current program and explore what is next. The team will start to visit and examine various kindergarten programs throughout the region to determine a direction to recommend.

The Wonders program is continuing to develop. There is a long way to go, but it is in place. Over time, we hope to examine its effectiveness. Nevertheless, we will experience bumps along the way. This is certainly part of our District's mission for our students.

The District is continuing to work toward improving safety and security. Dr. Sterner-Hine has been working with Officer Gordon and others to finalize and update the emergency plans. In addition, the Safe School Team continues to meet in order to review and make suggestions for safety issues. Additionally, there is a team being constructed, and will continue to include more stakeholders, to address school climate and environment. This group would examine bullying, discipline and other factors that impact school climate and the environment in which students learn and employees work. This will take some time, and will likely be an ongoing process. Again, this is one of our district's values and a concern—A safe and secure environment.

Another area we have been working on, but knowing we have a long way to go, is communication. This is a concern and a focus point (or theme) of WASD. We are working to develop better communication with staff, parents, students and the community. Teacher, support staff, and PTO Presidents are a few that have already met or have the first meeting date set. A parent, realtor and other advisories are in the works. The notes to those meetings are being studied by administration. However, we are working to establish a sound process for review and developing a priority list for addressing the various items learned during the advisory. From experience, I've learned if you start too many advisories without a process for reviewing the data from those meetings, the information can get lost. That is why the advisories should be established over time. WASD is also beginning to use more surveys as a district. We have done two in two months. Again, as we develop a process for review, the survey results will become more meaningful and witness plans toward improving areas of priority. We still have a lot to do. The plan is to develop a communication team that would perform a communication inventory and a survey to help guide where we need to improve. Every organization needs to improve communication. However, if we do not inventory what we already do (effective and ineffective means) and survey to learn from the stakeholders what other areas need addressed, we are just guessing.

Another area we are working at is Relationships. This is a Focus Point or Theme. Additionally, it is a WASD Value—Community Involvement. In this area, we started the school year by inviting community leaders to our opening day. The purpose is to communicate the direction of the district to our community. It is also a way to reach and partner with the community. We are working to start a Realtor and a Community/Business Advisory. These are two ways to listen and communicate with the community. The District is working with various organizations and agencies in the area in order to build partnerships or collaborate. This is an area with much work to do, but we will continue to build the relationships with the community. WASD is also working to build relationships with others as parents, substitutes, teachers and support staff. Again, we have a lot to accomplish and improve, but we have started to begin those relationships. That is the first step. We will never move fast enough, but we will make progress.

These are only a few of the steps we have taken to improve, but we are only in our seventh week of school. Nevertheless, we need to accomplish more. There are more things we have achieved in this

short period of time, but, for time's sake, only certain ones were focused on here for Update No. 7. Stay tuned for more as the year progresses.

Are We Making Progress Survey

The survey *Are We Making Progress* has been completed. The results will be shared sometime over the next few weeks. The results are very helpful. Many good suggestions and OFIs (Opportunities For Improvement). As we learn from the data, we will begin to address how to respond. In addition, this information will also be used to help the District plan for our goals and focus points for the next few years.

This Week's Events

- Leadership Model—Last week, a group of administrators teamed with the Greencastle-Antrim School District Administration for a workshop on how to develop an organization Leadership Model. I mentioned this during the opening day message, and it is now beginning to develop. The model will be prepared to share with our various stakeholders for feedback. As we gather data, we will use it to refine the model. The purpose of the model is to define a working ongoing plan or approach to improving the district or any other division or department of the district. It will be a common thread for improvement and a common language.
- PSSA Reports went home to parents this week.
- No school on Friday, October 6th—Parent Conferences and Teacher In-Service.
- No school on Monday, October 9th—Middle School Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at 2 PM. All staff is invited. Tours will be available after the ceremony.

Piece of the Puzzle

This week, our team member Mrs. Becky Poper, the Summitview and Hooverville cafeteria manager, has been nominated as the Piece of the Puzzle. She advocated to introduce grandparent's lunch at Summitview and then facilitated the letter that went home, handled the lunch count, and aided her staff in serving 40-65 extra lunches each day this week. Summitview had a total of 258 registered grandparents attend the first Grandparent Lunches Week. At \$4 a lunch, this event generated over \$1,000 in extra revenue for the cafeteria. More importantly, it was a great way to involve our families in our school. 'Way to go, Becky! When you see Becky, congratulate her for being the Piece of the Puzzle this week.

A Big Thank You

Last week, I received about 200 birthday wishes, cards, and notes. It took me hours at home Friday evening to read them all. It was very humbling and assuring that WASD is the best place to be for me. The gestures have been so thoughtful and kind, I was overwhelmed. I want to thank everyone for that

gesture. The gratefulness I feel is deep, strong and sincere. I am proud to be the superintendent of WASD. The people of this district are the reasons why I feel that way. Again, thank you.

Final Thoughts

What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.
Henry David Thoreau.

Unsuccessful people make decisions based on their current situations. Successful people make decisions based on where they want to be. Quopteistan.com.

Determine What you want and Why you want it. Once you understand what's important, you can utilize your Passions and achieve anything. Brooke Griffin.

A dream becomes a goal when action is taken toward its achievement. Bo Bennet.

The trouble with not having a goal is that you can spend your life running up and down the field and never score. Bill Copeland.

Have a great day, and cheer on the Boro teams. The football team takes on West Perry on Friday night at home. The team is 3-2 this season so far.

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