

Our Path to First Choice No. 16
2019/20

Everyone,

Here's Our Path note. Thank you for all you do for our students!

Our Path Topic—I apologize for the length, but it is an important topic!

Over the last two years we have been talking about *First Choice*. We know it is about each student, or learner, realizing his/her first choice in the next step of achieving one's career following high school. The vision is simple, but the journey is not yet completely defined.

Through a few earlier Path Notes we read how the elementary schools, middle school and high school are addressing *First Choice's* three pillars—Career, Whole Child, and Academic. However, the academic includes mass **customization, personalization, and individualization**.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), US Department of Education (US DOE), authors Mark C. Perna, Simon Sinek, Charles Schwann, Beatrice McGarvey and others subscribe to concepts of *First Choice*—including customized/personalized education. Perna and Sinek promote schools and businesses to focus young people on the “**Why**”. “Why are you attending school? Why are you taking this particular class?” These questions and more are Perna's recommendation for personalizing education for students today. He believes today's generation have been raised differently, and have different expectations in life. Therefore, he believes we should meet the students where they are at in interests and focus.

Schwann and McGarvey contend that we must start providing students more **choice, decision-making and responsibility** in one's own education. In addition, we need to develop students with **self-advocacy**. They call it “**agency**”. When students have more responsibility for their learning and advocates for themselves, they become more engaged. Instead of blaming the students of today for attitudes and lack of engagement, they believe we must take another approach if students are to become **learners**, and become more successful.

The US DOE and PDE both are directing and subscribing to a more career focused education for students from Pre K through twelfth grade. Grants and new programming requirements are reflecting that direction. These departments also recognize the social and mental health challenges students are bringing to school, and are responding with grants, policies, and requirements.

As a district, we are working to have staff embrace this approach in order to achieve *First Choice*. It is a tool to help reach *First Choice*, not *First Choice* itself. Meeting the student where he or she is. Providing them more choice and promote self-advocacy in learning. It is the **MAP acronym or Mastery-Advocacy-Purpose**. It is about teachers being more facilitating to assist students in choices in learning and the purpose for what they are learning. When you have the Essential Question on the board at the beginning of class—can students answer the **Essential Question** at the end of the class?

This direction is not going away. This is where WASD is going. This is education 21st Century. We wonder why we reach a ceiling with proficient test scores, and just can't seem to improve more and more. Until we can help students understand the purpose for their education, provide choices, and give them opportunities to master to the level that fits that child's goals and objectives, we will not be successful in the 21st Century as a school system. Students need to engage and learn how to learn.

If we begin to adopt and follow through with the MAP concept of the Academic Pillar of *First Choice*, we will be much more student-centered than ever before. We say we are student focused, but we tend to practice otherwise.

If the doctor treated us the same way for everything and forced no choices on us, we would not likely return to that doctor. As educators, we have to start moving in that same direction. Let's start moving to the 21st Century!

Board Information and Policy Updates

- Next School Board Meetings.
 - **December 17th at 7 PM is a Board Meeting at the Middle School.** This is a regular board meeting. It will include discussion about the proposed plan for redistricting of elementary attendance zones.

You may check out District policies by going to this site: <https://www.boarddocs.com/pa/wayn/Board.nsf/Public>

Reminder about Winter/Holiday Break

The Winter/Holiday Break will be from December 23rd through January 1st. School will be back in session January 2nd.

The New WellSpan Clinic

Located at the high school in the new Early Learning Center, the WellSpan Walk-In Clinic.

Hours starting October 28th:

- **Monday and Friday- 7am to 11am.**
- **Thursday- 3pm to 6pm**

Good Health Practice for this Time of the Year

<http://www.healthyfranklincounty.org/healthier-options-holiday-meals>

A Challenge for You

What is a Board Retreat?

Piece of the Puzzle

This week's Piece of the Puzzle is Tim McCleaf as the representative for the McCleaf Transportation Company. McCleaf Busses do so much for WASD. Tim helps with examining weather conditions in order to determine if transportation can traverse through the weather event or not. McCleafs have provided free transportation when an emergency need arises, and has gone above and beyond to make the issues of transporting students much easier. With that dedication and commitment, that is why Tim McCleaf of McCleaf Transportation has been nominated as the Piece of the Puzzle. If you see Tim, congratulate him for being a WASD Piece of the Puzzle!

Challenge Answer (Important to Know)

A Board Retreat is an event or non-public meeting school boards hold to set direction and goals. It can also be an opportunity for professional development. The word "retreat" triggers thoughts of spending

time at a resort, but a school board retreat is an opportunity for planning and learning. The WASD school board holds its retreats at Clayton Avenue Administration Building.

Final Thoughts

- *The moment you take responsibility for everything in your life is the moment you can change anything in your life.*—Hal Elrod, Writer
- *It's nice to see how students respond when given the responsibility. One teacher noted that a student who would normally be a problem in other situations was working with other students in trying to get them organized for one of the events.*—Fred Rose, Song writer and publisher.
- *Responsibility for learning belongs to the student, regardless of age.*—Robert Martin, Engineer and magazine editor.
- *Give young people a greater voice. They are the future and they are much wiser than we give them credit for.*—Desmond Tutu, Bishop of Johannesburg.
- *Leadership today is about giving people a voice so they can think for themselves. Empower and Engage people!*—Patricia Hatley, Leadership Author.

Enjoy the rest of your week!

Tod