

On My Desk and On My Mind - May 6, 2022 Edition

Recently I have had the chance to gather with families to hear about their hopes and dreams, successes and obstacles through 2 family night events. In a separate conversation a parent and community member shared that they are happy to partner and collaborate to celebrate what our school does well and grow in our areas of need, but that often after conversations and meetings in the past they have been left wondering, 'What ever happened with that meeting.' And, 'Did the school ever do anything with that information?' This made me reflect. It made me realize I can continue to do a better job clearly lining out what we are up to, what we do after a meeting, and what is on the horizon. Here's my attempt to adjust to that feedback.

On my desk:

- An agreement with NAC Architecture....Waterville School received a Study and Survey Grant from OSPI to determine facility needs for our school over the coming 30 years or so. As a part of the process we have completed a Natural Hazards Assessment with an engineering firm from Wenatchee. We also interviewed 3 architects and a panel of myself, our board chair, and our business manager chose NAC Architecture, a large firm from Spokane, to help us complete the first phase of this project which includes determining facility capacity and needs of our current facility. Find out more about NAC here: <https://www.nacarchitecture.com/index.html>
Next steps include:
 - Carefully assessing the current facilities, both indoor and outdoor.
 - Determining our communities needs and wants for future facilities for our students. (contact me if you are interested in serving on a facility committee to advise the administration and board during this process)
 - Working toward those facility needs through grants, matching funds, use of district funds, partnerships, and possible levies or bonds.
- Some blueprints....Waterville School received a Small District Modernization Grant this year. We are working with a local architect, Forte Architects, to complete a blueprint design to present for this grant funding. The grant itself provided \$30,000 toward planning. We are then placed on 'a list' by OSPI and will receive full funding for our ask (\$750,00) when we are next up on the list. The focus of the grant is safety, and the grant would redesign our entryway to ensure a safe and secure entry for all students. Contact me to schedule a time to review the draft plans so far! I'm excited to share the designs which are based on best practices for school safety and efficiency for our small school. Find out more about Forte at: <https://www.fortearchitects.com/>
- A map... Friday Shocker Football and lots and lots of volunteers (about 30 of them) worked to support Tour De Bloom, one of the largest road race bicycle events in our region. The event allowed the group to use our facility as the start and finish line and encourage exciting events like this in our community. In return our football team will be receiving a generous donation from Tour De Bloom to purchase a new blocking sled. Win – win for sure.
- So many notes and surveys... We are gathering input. Our family night partners shared their 'portrait of a graduate' and told us what skills, characteristics and experiences they wanted every Waterville grad to have as they walked across the stage. We are compiling that information now. Next step, gathering the same information from students, employers, and our wider community. Then, I will share this information with our board of directors to allow them to reflect how input connects to or diverges from to our Waterville Promise, mission, vision, and strategic plan documents. We are also gathering surveys from several other sources. These surveys allow us to determine how parents, staff and students feel about the safety, instruction, and culture at our school. You will see surveys from the Leader in Me and the Center for Educational Excellence in your email. We have been able to make needed improvements to our work over the past 3 years and continue with other practices after we receive the results. Your input is critical to allow us to determine next steps toward achieving our board goals. Contact me if you would like to talk about this process.
- Announcements.... Those of you who know me know that I love seniors. I really, really do. This year I have transitioned to strictly a superintendent role. I miss the seniors. I miss planning for the milestones and celebrating the events big and small during the mad rush to graduation. But, dang, Mr. Gasbar has got it

'handled'. Seniors have completed senior presentations. They are preparing for final exams. They are walking across the field on their last senior night. Graduation is coming and so is the Class of 2022! Please join us on June 11 at 1 pm in the gym as we return to a 'BIG OLE' community graduation celebration.

On my mind:

- I had the chance to have lunch recently with Shocker grad Evelyn Negrette. Now, if you know Evelyn you love that lady. She is bright, articulate, and kind. Evelyn is currently working as a nurse at an Oncology unit after completing her nursing program. When I met with Evelyn I wanted to know about her family, her new husband, her college dorm, her travels and dreams and her classmates. I also wanted to know what she could tell me about her experiences. Evelyn was a first gen college student. She graduated at the top of her class. She received SO MANY scholarships from our generous community. And she made it. She attended UW Bothel and navigated the complexities of the process. She received lots of scholarships in year one. So many in fact that it more than paid for her first year of school. So what did Evelyn do? She called the scholarship grantors. She asked them to bank those dollars. She was able to pay for school and even has a little bit left as she finishes up a few more classes. I asked Evelyn how she did it. What I learned is the Evelyn learned how to advocate, communicate, and reach out for support during her time at Waterville. She called scholarship committees, talked to her university, and worked to make those dollars work for her. I think is what we all want for our graduates. Of course, we want students to have finite, specific skills, but even more perhaps we want students to know how to find information, learn new things, apply those learnings and advocate for themselves. This really is the foundation of the Leader In Me. It is finding the ability to apply the habits of effective people to life beyond our school walls. This is what I will continue to focus on as we enter crazy May and June and plan for our future.

As always, call me...email me...meet with me. We are working together for our students. And it is the MOST IMPORTANT JOB ON THE PLANET. Thanks for partnering with us and supporting our work by celebrating the good and helping us readjust as we learn how to do this work better and better. Without a doubt, you have the best people working on behalf of our students.

All my best,

Tabatha Mires Superintendent
509-745-8583
tmires@waterville.wednet.edu