

Which way do we go?



GPS Middle School has several internal teams, including an Aspirations Team, Curriculum Team, and School Culture Team. Each team works independently and creates their own milestones. Although each team works hard and achieves success, the overall school progress is stagnant due to a lack of common direction. Staff are frustrated that all of their hard work has not had a more significant impact on the school overall.

Think about your Aspirations Team experiences. Is there unity across teams within your school, or does the lack of a shared direction and siloed efforts inhibit progress? How might you facilitate greater coherence across various teams at your school?

Goldilocks: Too little, too much, or just right?



At the beginning of the school year, Porridge High School has two days of in-service training. Staff learn about school rules, regulations, new curriculum expectations, new programs and initiatives, state mandates, assessment updates, and the much-anticipated information on bloodborne pathogens.

Your team has learned a great deal and has vast resources about Student Voice & Aspirations strategies. What is your plan for sharing this with the full staff and supporting colleagues in a manner that is exciting and engaging, yet not overwhelming?

It's all in the delivery



UPS Elementary School strives to keep everyone informed. Memos with updates go out several times a day, and the staff room is plastered with team summaries, assessment data, and school goals. Despite these communication efforts, staff still feel disconnected and not quite sure what is happening.

Consider how your Aspirations Team keeps the full staff informed. What methods are effective and which are not? How does your Aspirations Team ensure transparency and help everyone feel like extended members of your team?

Communication Challenges

Fizzle



At the start of the year, the Aspirations Team is excited, staff are enthusiastic, and students are involved in Aspirations work at Sputter Intermediate School. Support and resources are provided and everyone knows the “why” and “how” of the work. It is going to be a productive year with measurable Student Voice & Aspirations outcomes! Fast forward to February, and everyone is wondering where the year has gone. Goals have been missed, excitement has waned, and everyone is frustrated. What happened to the great plan?

How does your Aspirations Team prevent mid-year fizzle out? From your experiences with other school and classroom initiatives, what communication strategies can help to positively sustain forward progress as a school year progresses?

Piling it on



Heap School District coordinates many initiatives and programs. Each year something new is added, but nothing ever seems to be taken off the very full plate. The superintendent sees the connections between the various district and school initiatives. However, the connections are lost in the weeds for the staff. From their perspective, the latest and greatest is just one more “to do”.

How does your Aspirations Team connect your work with other initiatives and school goals to facilitate working as efficiently as possible? How does your team make the connections clear and meaningful so that everyone understands the “why” behind things they are being asked to do? Consider things that may have fulfilled their purpose or are no longer necessary that could be removed to make space for new actions.

Discuss



- What are your Aspirations Team’s communication strengths? What makes these so effective?
- What are your Aspirations Team’s communication challenges? What contributes to this?
- Share examples of how your Aspirations Team has effectively communicated its purpose and goals to others, and what current communication challenges you need to overcome.