



“Does Encouragement Open Communication Doors”

Principal Name: Brent Berkeypile

School Name: Wawasee Middle School

Principal's Email Contact: bberkeypile@wawasee.k12.in.us

Background Leading to My Inquiry (Slide 2)

In taking a new position I wanted to make sure that staff was comfortable with approaching administration with different issues or ideas that they would have. Open lines of communication between Administration and staff are a necessity for a well run school. As a new principal I wanted to increase the lines for communication and remove barriers that would prevent staff from communicating with administration.

Would providing encouraging notes open those lines and break those barriers? I will show what I have found in my research.

The Purpose of My Inquiry (Slide 3)

Therefore, the purpose of my action inquiry was to send notes of encouragement and appreciation to help make a deeper connection with my staff so I can make more informed decisions.

My Wondering (Slide 4)

With this purpose, I wondered if being more intentional about sending positive and appreciative notes to staff would improve my relationships with and understanding of my staff? Would teachers be more willing to approach administration?

My Actions (Slide 5)

I will send emails, cards, and personalized notes of appreciation to all staff. I will send 2 different notes of appreciation to staff members.

Data Collection (Slide 6)

I began sending my notes in December and concluded at the end of March. I kept a spreadsheet to ensure I sent two notes to all staff. I also kept all reply emails and I also kept notes on conversations where teachers approached me. Most of my useful data was qualitative besides the basic amount of notes given out.

My Data (Slides 7,8, 9, 10)

My Data shows the dates and amount of notes sent to staff. Also, I have the responses that I received by the staff in reply to my notes of encouragement. I also have my personal notes that were kept from my interactions with staff during the time that the notes were given.

My Discoveries (Slide 11,12)

- Learning Statement One: Encouragement is easy to do and all it takes is some time.
- Learning Statement Two: Encouragement from the leaders is such a key for teacher morale.
- Learning Statement Three: Encouragement will help break down barriers to communication.

Every administrator needs to take time and be intentional about sending notes of encouragement to their staff. It only takes a small investment of time and the investment in time that it takes to do this will pay off two fold. Teacher morale is an important part of school culture, encouragement is the one of the key ways to help boost that morale. When administrators encourage staff it shows a natural caring about the teachers or staff members self worth which naturally opens up communication opportunities. Encouragement is beneficial for making the administrators feel more approachable and helps them become more relatable.

Where I Am Heading Next (Slide 13)

In the future, I will continue to provide that encouragement for teachers and staff to ensure the culture and lines of communication stay strong. I know it is easy to get busy and sometimes other items in our day seem more important but it needs to be a priority. So to make it a priority, I'm going to put in a reminder in my calendar to make sure I give five encouraging notes every two weeks.

Bibliography

N/A

Does Encouragement Open Communication Doors”



Wawasee Middle School
Brent Berkeypile
bberkeypile@wawasee.k12.in.us

Background

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Purpose

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Data Collection

I began sending my notes in December and concluded at the end of March. I kept a spreadsheet to ensure I sent two notes to all staff. I also kept all reply emails and I also kept notes on conversations where teachers approached me. Most of my useful data was qualitative besides the basic amount of notes given out. The first round of notes were e-mails sent to staff. The second round was hand written notes to the staff.


My Data

- List of Names, Dates, and number of notes sent.

1	Name	Note #1	Note #2
2	Allen, Lauren	12/11/20	2/1/21
3	Baker, Kari	12/11/20	2/1/21
4	Bauer, Sarah	12/19/20	2/1/21
5	Bechtel, Hope	12/14/20	2/1/21
6	Beer, Trent	1/6/21	2/1/21
7	Bontrager, Angie	1/6/21	2/1/21
8	Bumgardner, Frank	1/6/21	2/1/21
9	Burlingame, Julie	1/6/21	2/1/21
10	Burns, Anne	1/7/21	2/1/21
11	Connett, Deb	1/7/21	2/1/21
12	Connor, Ryan	1/7/21	2/1/21
13	Cook, Peggy	1/7/21	2/1/21
14	Corrao, Chauncey	1/7/21	2/1/21
15	Cross, Toby	1/8/21	2/1/21
16	Denlinger, Stephanie	1/8/21	2/1/21
17	Dickerson, Tom	1/8/21	2/1/21
18	Dixon, Lori	1/8/21	2/1/21
19	Dubach, Joyce	1/8/21	2/15/21
20	Eberly, Darla	1/9/21	2/15/21
21	Edgar, Ryan	1/9/21	2/15/21
22	Everingham, Carly	1/9/21	2/15/21
23	Farrington, Janet	1/9/21	2/15/21
24	Gilreath, Derek	1/9/21	2/15/21
25	Glas, Nick	1/11/21	2/15/21
26	Graber, Drew	1/11/21	2/15/21
27	Graff, Alma	1/11/21	2/15/21
28	Griffith, Heather	1/11/21	2/15/21
29	Guill-Farr, Michele	1/11/21	2/15/21

My Data Cont.....

I received 30 positive responses back. Here are some examples.

 **Brent Berkepile** <bberkepile@wawasee.k12.in.us>
to Angela ▾ Wed, Jan 6, 9:55 AM ☆ ↶ ⋮


Angie,


I just wanted to tell you how much I appreciate all you do for our students. Thanks for all the time you spend teaching, coaching, and building great relationships with students. I love watching you work with students and you can tell you truly care about them and enjoy your work, that is infectious.

"Life is ten percent what happens to you and ninety percent how you respond to it."

Lou Holtz

Brent Berkepile
Wawasee Middle School
Principal
bberkepile@wawasee.k12.in.us
574-457-8839



 **Angela Bontrager** <abontrager@wawasee.k12.in.us>
to me ▾ Wed, Jan 6, 10:23 AM ☆ ↶ ⋮

Thank you so much Brent I appreciate that! I love my job, love those that I work with, and love these kiddos like they are my own. I couldn't imagine doing anything else in life. God has truly blessed me with an amazing school to work at and with amazing people..

Thank you for all that you do for our building and the passion that shows in your work every day. I appreciate everything you do for us as staff!


Angie Bontrager
7th Grade Math & Science Teacher
Middle School Cross Country
Wawasee Middle School

My Data Cont.....

Another example.....

Thanks  [IPLI encouragement responses](#) 



Brent Berkepile <bberkepile@wawasee.k12.in.us>
to Rebecca 

Mon, Mar 1, 5:47 PM   

Becca,

I just wanted to say thank you for all that you do for your kids. I love your gentleness with the kids. It's really easy to tell how much you care for your students. I also appreciate your leadership with Kate, I know she really looks up to you and deservedly so. So thanks for all you do to make our school great.

--

"Life is ten percent what happens to you and ninety percent how you respond to it."
Lou Holtz

Brent Berkepile
Wawasee Middle School
Principal
bberkepile@wawasee.k12.in.us
574-457-8839



Rebecca Nguyen <rnguyen@wawasee.k12.in.us>
to me 

Wed, Mar 3, 10:11 AM   

Thank you so much for taking the time to share this w/ me. I can live off something like this for a month! :D Thanks for all your encouragement and for helping me to become a better teacher. I'm so thankful to work for you Brent!

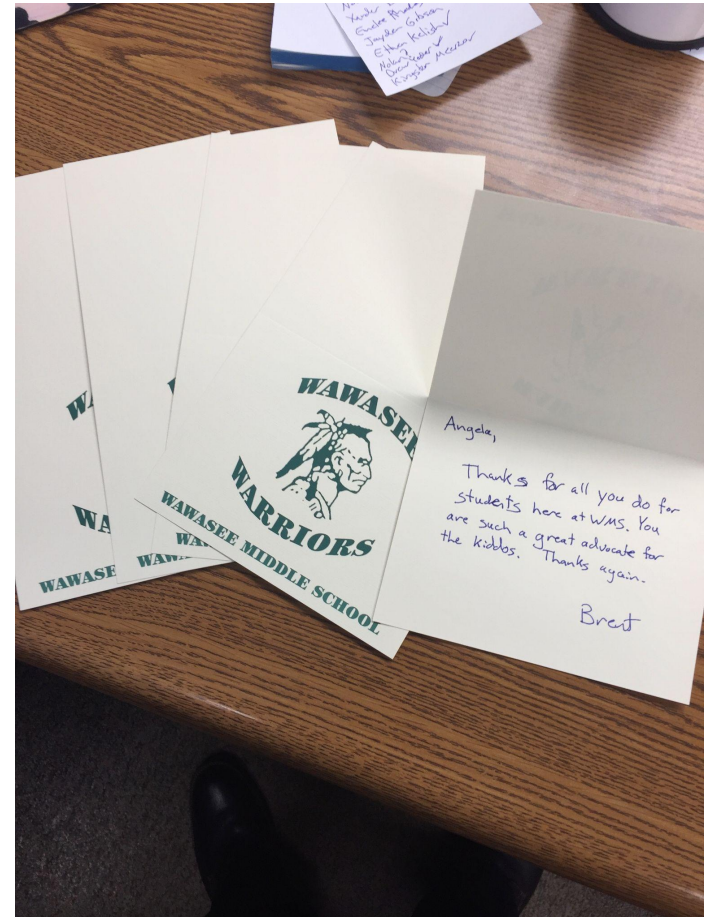
Rebecca Nguyen
7th Grade Language Arts Teacher
Drama Club Sponsor

Wawasee Middle School
Syracuse, IN
574-457-8839 x3731

My Data Cont.....

Hand Written Notes.....

Most of my responses from the written notes were in the form of conversations. You could really feel the joy that the notes brought to staff.



My Discoveries

Learning Statement One: Encouragement is easy to do and all it takes is some time.

Learning Statement Two: Encouragement from the leaders is such a key for teacher morale.

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My Discoveries Cont.....

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When administrators encourage staff it shows a natural caring about the teachers or staff members self worth which naturally opens up communication opportunities. Encouragement is beneficial for making the administrators feel more approachable and helps them become more relatable.

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