Communicating with Purpose
“Harnessing the Power of Google to Create a Centralized Communications Hub in Your Organization.”

ACSA Lead 3.0 Symposium
April 12, 2019

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Principal, Meadow Green Elementary School
Lowell Joint School District
My Purpose for Presenting Today

- **Why?**- To inspire to use the power of reflection to innovate your method of communication with your organization.
- **How?**- Through being purposeful and using Google to enhance communication with your staff.
- **What?**- I will share...
  - Communications plan
  - Google Docs Enhanced Staff Bulletin
  - A “Google Hub”
Quick Poll of Audience Composition

- Level- Elem, MS, HS, Other?
- Current Position- Aspiring, AP, Principal, District, Other?
- Level of Tech Comfort/Skills- Emerging, Moderate, Established?
My Story

- Grew up in NYS, came out to California in 2009
- Started my career in the La Habra City School District
  - RSP Teacher - Middle School
  - Assistant Principal at Washington Middle School...to my APs and other aspiring Principals, keep grinding, learn daily, challenges now will make you stronger when you make your jump.
  - Brief time as an Interim Principal at Ladera Palma Elementary School
  - Learn from those around you, reflect, take feedback...this will help you get better.

- Current Principal at Meadow Green Elementary School in LJSD
  - Lowell Joint is a K-8 district that serves LA and Orange Counties in La Habra, Whittier, and La Habra Heights
  - Meadow Green in a TK-6 School w/ a preschool mild/moderate and moderate/severe SDC program
  - Enrollment is about 560 students, 40% SED, less than 10% ELLs
  - 22 teachers and multiple part-time support and office staff
Workshop Objectives

● Review the importance of communication and the dissemination of information, especially when transitioning to a new site and staff!
● Spark an awareness of generational differences, of which we should be mindful!
● Share and review the importance of developing and being purposeful w/ a comprehensive internal and external communications plan (who, what, how)
● Provide an overview of tools that we use at Meadow Green to streamline communication and information (Google Hub, Weekly staff bulletin/GoogleDoc w/ hyperlinks)
● Share out samples and “how to” screencasts via Google.
Mind the “Generational” Gap
## Generational Gap Continued

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<tr>
<td>What is the worst a leader can do?</td>
<td>Kill their legacy</td>
<td>Fire them</td>
<td>Not develop their talents</td>
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<td>How do you listen to a leader?</td>
<td>Auditory</td>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>Kinesthetic</td>
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<td>What is your perception of a good leader?</td>
<td>Honorable Monarchy</td>
<td>Command and Control</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
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<td>Do you trust your leaders and your colleagues?</td>
<td>Provided a job for 30+ years - yes</td>
<td>No-they will fire me</td>
<td>No-I trust my friends</td>
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<td>What are your hero paradigms?</td>
<td>WWII and Vietnam, JFK</td>
<td>Fictional Characters from Movies</td>
<td>None, prefer rebels</td>
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<td>What is your reward for leadership at work?</td>
<td>Work hard get a pension</td>
<td>Work hard get fired</td>
<td>Work to play</td>
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<td>What is your approach at work?</td>
<td>One unit, one team</td>
<td>Get the job done well, don’t make waves</td>
<td>I change based on the required results</td>
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<td>How is your leader tied to your engagement level?</td>
<td>My level of engagement in with the leader</td>
<td>I am engaged with the job, the leader changes</td>
<td>I am engaged with the people at work, not the leader, they change</td>
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<td>How do you know your leader values you?</td>
<td>Corner office</td>
<td>Money</td>
<td>Free time to work on fun things</td>
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<td>Who was your mentor?</td>
<td>Middle manager in my early career</td>
<td>Didn’t have one</td>
<td>My parents, my teacher</td>
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<td>How do you articulate your anger with your leader?</td>
<td>Logical arguments, sometimes yell, take it home</td>
<td>I tend not to; I know I will be fired. Take it home, yell, workout</td>
<td>I quit</td>
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<td>Is it vision, morals or ethics that compels you to follow a leader?</td>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>Morals &amp; Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What drives your faith in your team?</td>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Conversations</td>
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Plan for Communication, Clarity, & Commitment...Why, How, What and Who?

- Why do we communicate in the way that we do?
- Learn from mentors & colleagues. Collaborate & share ideas.
  - Through this process you’ll learn what may work and not work for you as a leader
  - Listen to your stakeholders
- When changing districts/schools a whole lot of input starts to come to you in a fast pace...how will you begin / do you communicate with your staff and your families
- Be purposeful. Start with asking why? Then, focus on who, how, and what...then commit!
  - A good way to get started with these questions is by engaging in purposeful conversation and listening.
  - Meadow Green Communications Plan
  - Delegate, divide, and conquer!
Choose the Method and Medium
Gathering Input

As a first year Principal moving to a new district, school, and level, I took the following steps:

- Meet and greet with my full staff (thank you to LJSD for setting this up).
- Meet and greet with parents, students, and families at the beginning of the summer (thank you to LJSD for setting this up).
- Early Summer “get up to speed” meeting w/ PTA.
- One on one, structured ½ hour to 2 hour meetings with every staff member assigned to my site throughout the summer
  - Structured, but also informal

Taking this time for outreach, has been, by far, one of the best decisions I have made so far...anyone in attendance nearing the transition to site leader, I highly recommend doing so.
Communicate the Why.

We often ask people to follow us, but fail to communicate why? This can cause confusion!
The Staff Bulletin...Why do we do this?

● What’s your purpose?
  ○ My goal is to communicate information in a clear and concise way and to streamline the process by which staff is able to access information.
    ■ If I am reducing the amount of time that my Office Manager and I are providing dates, times, and schedules I consider this a win!
    ■ This allows my Office Manager to focus on customer service and running our office.
    ■ It also allows me to be more present and active on-campus

● Does your staff use or even read everything that’s sent to them?

● Paper vs. Paperless?
  ○ Listen to your staff
A Collaborative Google Docs Bulletin...the Meadow Green Process

- The benefits of using Google to create a staff bulletin:
  - Increases collaboration
  - Allows resources to be linked
  - Is easily shared/referenced
  - The Meadow Green process:
    - Wednesday - A draft of the bulletin is created by administration with dates/times filled in from calendars and lists
    - Thursday - A link to the bulletin w/ edit rights is sent to Office and Special Ed staff for cross checking of dates/times.
    - Friday afternoon - The bulletin is changed to “read only” and is sent out to all staff to review and send any feedback needed
    - Monday morning - The bulletin is finalized w/ any feedback submitted by staff.
      - A paper copy is printed and placed in mailboxes & a link to the current week is posted on the staff “Google Hub.”
    - [Bulletin Sample...also avail from the sample hub](#)
A Google Hub

• **Purpose**— “The purpose of the Meadow Green staff Google Hub is to keep essential communications, schedules, lists, and other important information in a central location.”
  ○ Like many great ideas, I borrowed something a colleague was doing and made it work for me and my staff.

• **The benefits**
  ○ *Internal, safe, and secure*
  ○ *Simple, easy to update and use*
  ○ *Promotes late adopters utilizing Google Tools*

• **The idea came from an administrator using a similar “hyperdoc.”**
  ○ Using slides enables everything to be laid out in an efficient, one page manner.

• **Using Google Apps vs. a Website....there are advantages and disadvantages to each.**
  ○ The biggest advantage to me is feeling safe and secure with being able to control access as opposed to a website, which is open to the public.
Google Hub Working Sample

Sample Google Hub Link
How To Resources

- How to add and edit hyperlinks in Google - Tutorial Video
- How to share a calendar
- How to turn a Microsoft or Google Document into a PDF for sharing
- Sharing and permission settings
Add and Edit Hyperlinks
Sharing a Calendar
Permissions for Sharing
Questions / Discussion

● Potential Topics
  ○ Other ideas for usage...lots of potential at the secondary & district levels
  ○ Innovative ways you communicate with your staff
  ○ What will you / do you do to gather input and form your leadership in your site, department, organization etc.

● I’d love to connect with you to continue the collaboration
  ○ mcukro@lisd.org
  ○ @mrcukro - Twitter