



May 20, 2009

Gault Middle School
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It is my privilege to share with you the successes we are experiencing and celebrating in Tacoma with the support/coaching of Libby Wagner.

Ms. Wagner was contracted to work with a staff historically unable to communicate with one another professionally and personally. She worked closely with me and my Instructional Facilitator to self-diagnose our staff's strengths and challenges. Her expertise enabled her to see clearly the path toward healing we would take. She set to work immediately building the relationships with our teacher leaders to create anchors for the work. These teacher leaders practiced skills/techniques for constructively addressing challenging personnel. These empowered teacher leaders became the foundation of Ms. Wagner's all school work. Her approachability, humor, pacing and expertise earned her a great deal of immediate trust and collateral. Staff clearly hungered for a solution to their misery and Ms. Wagner provided a sustainable remedy. She introduced common language to help us identify and address conflict professionally rather than personally.

Over the course of the first year which included consistent training over the course of four Waiver Days and several trainings with the Lead Team of the school, Ms. Wagner successfully turned a toxic building around.

The second year, Ms. Wagner returned to continue the healing work already bearing fruits. Early in the year, it was announced that both our school and its sister middle school would be closing and combining students in a new building. Staff were rightfully concerned about their professional future. Answers were few, far between and fuzzy at best. Teachers' questions went unanswered as there were no answers. Ms. Wagner's skills were brought to bare helping teacher navigate the often disruptive and unsettling waters of change while keeping their professionalism and charge—students and learning—in focus.

Thanks to the groundwork laid the first year, teacher leaders at Gault were able to step into the storm to plan activities for both staff that kept the ships of both schools on course. Ms. Wagner trained both staffs at combined Waiver Days and was a side by side coach for teacher leaders endeavoring to keep both buildings positive, professional, student-centered and healthy.

As the year progressed, I was incredibly impressed by the availability Ms. Wagner had for teacher leaders striving to mentor and be role models during the merger process. This strong group of teachers soon found themselves able to stand alone as their practiced professional communication had become second nature. Throughout a very trying year, with Ms. Wagner's support and training, teachers were able to keep such an upbeat and professional demeanor.

As September nears, Ms. Wagner will be called upon again in the new building to solidify the combined staff with common agreements about workplace climate and communication. She will remind us of the commitment we've made to one another. I look forward to Ms. Wagner coaching our strong, professional, democratic staff able to self monitor and adjust behaviors to be consistently in line with our core values.

Please feel free to contact me about way your organization might employ Ms. Wagner. I am happy to share our successes. 253-381-0555

Delores Beason
Principal Gault and First Creek Middle Schools