



Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education News and Views



"Five enemies of peace inhabit with us — avarice, ambition, envy, anger, and pride; if these were to be banished, we should infallibly enjoy perpetual peace." — Petrarch

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The Winter Wonderland Issue

December 8, 2004

Focus on Learning:

"Communication is an Art: But so many of us fingerprint"

- Enrique Irlanda de Escocia

This year, the third year of our current accreditation, we are reviewing our school improvement plans, and both measuring our progress and determining what strategic steps need to be taken next.

Communication was one of the glaring needs that emerged in our self-study process of four years ago. It has been something that we have worked on hard, in specific ways, in the last few years. There have been some mixed reviews for a lot of our efforts. In addition to sharing earlier in News and Views some of our mid-term self-evaluation, this issue we present to you the results of an all-faculty survey done by one of our "Leadership Cohorts." Six of our staff are in a graduate program focusing on School Leadership. Four of those, Elizabeth Cunningham, Cathy Jo Diaz, Kim Iwasko and Cary Keisler, developed a survey instrument, distributed it, compiled results and teacher comments. What you have on page two of this issue are the results of those surveys. Given that most of our teachers are part-time and have very different schedules, they Cohort did a masterful job of getting a good response to the survey. Some in the Cohort were surprised that the results indicated that many teachers are pretty positive about the state of communication in our school. I was surprised that they were surprised. It's a good reminder for us in the classroom too, how do we know our class is satisfied? Are we listening to a few, or have we strategies to gauge the whole class? In any case, I am grateful to the good work of the team of leaders who put the survey together and shared the results and comments with us.
(cont. on p.2)



*Holiday Potluck
Friday, Dec. 17
Green Valley, 4:00-6:00*

Join your colleagues in a time of holiday cheer and/or sober reflection. We are having the annual faculty and staff potluck on Friday afternoon, December 17. Debbie Lerma has promised that there will special entertainment (who can forget the "Santa Baby" number from two years ago??) Contact the Green Valley office to see what you are bringing for the potluck. Bring your families, friends, pick ups off the street!! All welcome.

Both adult school offices (Green Valley and Porter) will be open from 8:00-4:00 during winter vacation. Dec. 20-22, and 27-28. Spring semester begins Jan. 3. See calendar for more details.

Communication Surveys

Within our school, some staff members have expressed their concerns and discontent with the quality of communication, indicating that they have experienced gaps in the dissemination of information.

We decided to tackle the communication issues as part of a management project for our SJSU graduate program. The purpose of our project was to identify and rate our current communication methods. From this initial cycle of inquiry we planned on identifying our communication problems. We chose eight pertinent questions for the staff to rank. We included one more question to identify the most frequently used means of current communication. Through this preliminary survey, we wanted to discover how our staff rated our current communication methods.

Please see our attached survey results as of 12/04.
Pages 5 & 6.

Teacher Comments about Communication at WAAE:

1. How would you rate the overall communication at the Adult School?

- Email & newsletter keep me informed
- I never know what's going on
- I think the biggest problem is the calendar for ESL. When to do CASA testing & meetings? El Civics testing. Consultants teaching CBEST. Schedule ahead + have visible calendars (both electronic & hard copy)
- Toxic and dishonest on many levels [general comment: what is average? I have never had the "average" experience in the workplace]
- I think the Adult School is really striving for greater communication between it & me. Keep it up!
- Above average to excellent. This is a new experience working at a school where staff is spread out so far with many different sites. For the situation, I think communication is great. I can always call and generally get speedy response.
- For me, it's been excellent. However some other teachers don't seem as connected-especially off-site locations
- Email communication has been great in all areas. Phone ok. I do not own a computer so sometimes my responses are delayed or I don't get the message quickly
- It's getting better. However a lot of information is still not being communicated.
- Making a sincere effort
- Yes, much communication I observe between staff and teachers – GVC
- I can see that efforts are being made; the theory/objective of transparency and shared decision-making is not shared by all teachers and staff. I hope that we can improve this process so that it is inclusive
- Meetings are informative but no real communication between departments
- This is difficult to gauge. The whole school? But... I'd say the communication opportunities are above average, even excellent.
- Some things are great, but for the most parts the puzzle pieces don't fit yet
- We still have people who are missed, when it comes to communication

Teacher Comments about Communication at WAAE:

2. How would you rate the communication among staff?

- We all work different schedules & many of us are part-time
- I talk with immediate colleagues everyday
- No built-in opportunity to meet with other teachers at same site to coordinate.
- Site mtg. Info. Doesn't get back to me... help!!
- Don't see other staff much
- Some people here are rather chatty. That puts me in a difficult situation because I want to get along well, yet I also want to do a good job
- Not so good. Some teachers talk, others don't like each other.
- Could be better
- Communication among staff is good, but communication among the two offices are not so great
- I feel at times left out by the circle
- Some staff have developed excellent communication, others have not
- Definitely want to share and discuss
- There is open discussion but clerical/bureaucratic concerns dominate discussions.
- Below average - "among staff" is interpreted as between other staff members and me.

3. How would you rate the communication between your Department chair and you?

- Burr emails me & he's always available to talk
- N/A – but if the question was dept. chair to director, I'd answer excellent
- Communication is challenging because her hours are limited. Also, we don't have a regularly scheduled time to check in. she's very receptive when we talk.
- Good. She always checks in with me. Is Amy my department chair? Well, if it's Burr he communicates well with me.
- We communicate just fine
- There is a real effort to communicate
- We are here at the same time, so I can ask questions as they arise. Others in the department have told me they are not informed about things or notified as should be
- No share decision-making. Not 2-way discussions. Information only. Not approachable.
- "Average" only because I'm unsure who is my department chair.??

4. How would you rate your specific departmental meetings?

- It's a good opportunity to meet the other teachers
- I am not crazy about all these meetings!
- Have only attended a couple (newish teacher)
- Self reflection – I know I could do better
- Good. I go to VESL meetings. Not ever invited/informed of ESL meetings.
- Rambling, unfocused
- Rarely attend
- CBET – specific meetings have been MOST beneficial to me re: procedures, material, personnel, instruction strategies; sometimes too much but always practical and useful
- It seems like we could be talking about more critical issues such as how to teach better
- The last ESL meeting was great

Teacher Comments about Communication at WAAE:

4. How would you rate your specific departmental meetings?

- My first meeting was great
- What meetings?
- Focus is on communication and teachers being proactive in the process. Also discussion (open). See Porter report re: staff meeting. This is in process. We've had one meeting so far
- Informative
- Relatively speaking, above average. However, there is still room for improvement. Staff certainly "gets into it." Our dept. (ABE/ASE) has more frequent staff meetings than any other dept. in the school
- Not relevant to what is going on with our students or our teacher. More for your information, only top to bottom
- We are limited at what we can discuss at these meetings
- They are usually good but don't seem to happen often
- "Average" because if don't know what dept. I belong to – as the Spanish Literacy Teacher
- Too few and lack of clear agenda

5. How would you rate your opportunities to give input prior to decision-making?

- Burr asks of input & always listen
- I'm still new but am still asked for input on things
- Timeliness is a problem
- School in general – Department
- N/A – I only work Saturdays and can only make a few meetings
- Can't do it, if we don't know about it ahead of time
- There's that sign-up list on the wall in room 21
- It seems a lot of decisions are made without my knowledge
- This is the opportunity question. Everyone can give input at WAAE
- I am just a little peon here
- This is improving as I have been extending my participation; however, there is a fairly wide-spread perception among staff that many decisions are done deals before they reach the staff. Also, some staff feel discounted/not heard/not valued
- Many decisions are already made before I find out it had been part of discussion elsewhere

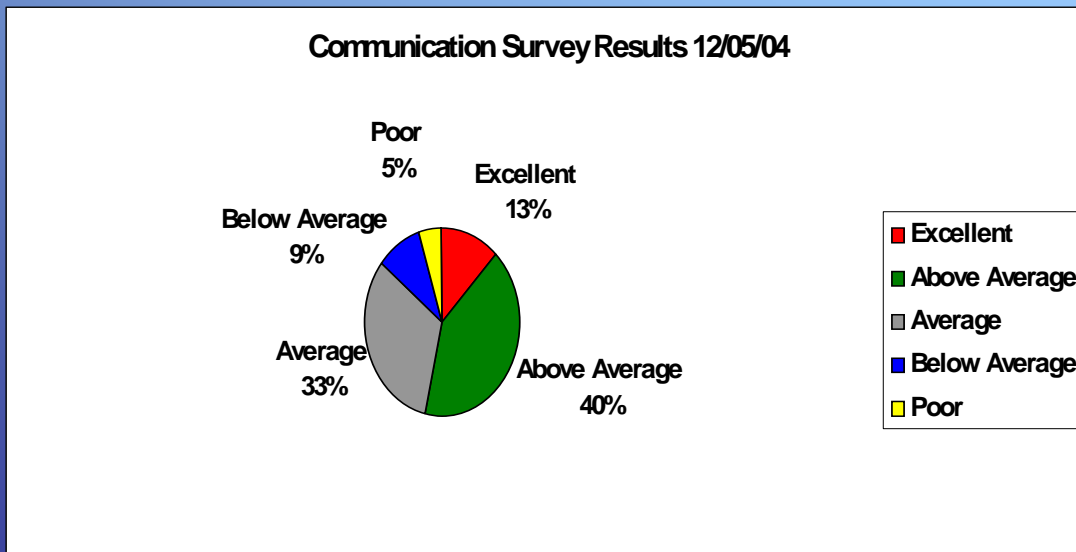
6. How would you rate your willingness to share and communicate?

- Always willing
- I plan on getting a computer in a couple of months
- I sure have nothing against it. And, hey, I'm filling this thing out, so that's gotta count, right?
- I want to communicate. However sometimes my news aren't heard.
- I am a fair person
- I work very, very hard at communicating. I am very willing although I don't always live up to my own standards of effective communication.

School Wide Communication Survey

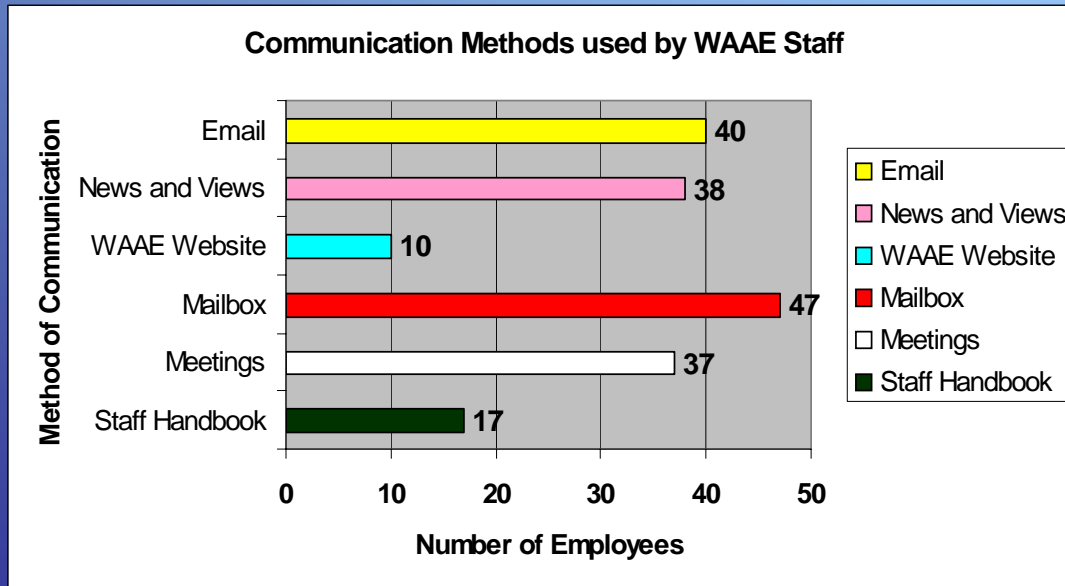
Please v Check the appropriate box for each question.						
Question	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor	Comments
How would you rate the overall communication at the Adult School?	8	26*	21	6	3	
How would you rate the communication among staff?	8	20	24*	10	3	
How would you rate the communication between your Department chair and you?	13	22*	14	5	1	
How would you rate your specific departmental meetings?	6	21*	24*	1	3	
How would you rate your opportunities to give input prior to decision-making?	15	19*	19*	8	4	
How would you rate your willingness to share and communicate?	20	22*	16	4	0	

Survey Results - 65 Responses



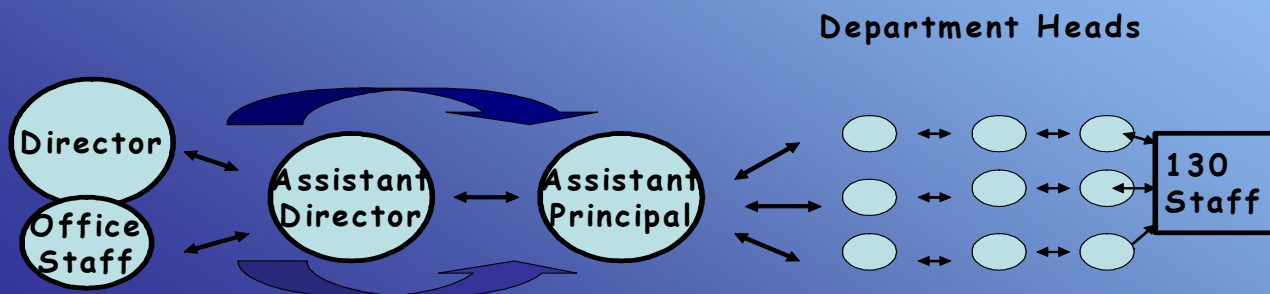
How can we improve the communication in the categories rated average and below average?

WAAE Most Used Communication Methods



What is the problem with Communication at WAAE?

- There are 2 central and 29 offsite locales, thus creating difficulties in ensuring that all staff are well informed.
- A large staff population.
- Staff are uncertain which routes of communication are the most direct and effective.





Mural Opening a Great Success!!

Over 100 people attended the three hour open house to look at the beautiful mural that Bonni Carver and Jane Reyes created with student ideas. Two of our board members, Sharon Gray and Rhea DeHart were very appreciative of the work.



Over 200 of our students attended an open house at Cabrillo Watsonville on Monday, Dec. 6. Here is a letter from Rachel Mayo, Director of Cabrillo Watsonville.

Hi Bob, just wanted to thank you and pass along to your staff our appreciation for the WAAE support of our open house - we had well over 200 students there and most of them were yours! I know someone talked to our Puente counselor Mario Garcia about making classroom visits next week at Green Valley, so either I or a department rep will be coming with him. Thanks again - I think it was a great success. Rachel.

TO: Distance Learning teachers
FROM: Karen Reid
SUBJECT: Networking meeting
DATE: November 30, 2004

Because of our varying work schedules, it wasn't possible (as usual!) to arrange a meeting that is convenient for all Distance Learning teachers. The time and location that works for the largest number of you is Friday 12-1 at Green Valley. The date that works best with my schedule is December 17. As that is the date of the holiday potluck from 4-6, I'm hoping that if we schedule our networking meeting 3-4, just before the holiday party, many (or most?) of you can make it. We can reflect on how the fall semester went, with our many changes, and talk about how to improve further in the spring. The meeting will be:

Friday, December 17
3:00-4:00 p.m.
Green Valley
(one hour paid)

Hope to see you there!



WAAS Calendar

Student Councils

Tuesday, December 14, Porter, Noon and 9:00pm

Wednesday, December 15, Noon and 9:00pm

School Council

Wednesday, December 15, Porter, 4:00-6:00

Important Meeting for Distance Learning Teachers

Friday, December 17

3:00-4:00 p.m.

Green Valley

(one hour paid)

**come hear the
dogs sing
carols!!**

All-School Holiday Pot-luck

Contact the Green Valley office to coordinate dishes.

Friday, Dec. 17

Green Valley, 4:00-6:00

(we expect Santa to bring Natalie for a visit)

Last day of classes, Fall Semester, Dec. 17/18.

A few lifelong learning classes will run Dec. 20-22.

Spring semester begins on Jan. 3 and ends June 3.

(see lead article for more specific starting
dates for different programs)



eClassManager™

There will be an Eclass Manager training
on Friday January 21, 2005 from 1:30p.m
– 3:30p.m. If anyone is interested in doing
their attendance on the computer, please
contact Debbie or Kim Iwasko.

(Join the future now!!)