LEADERSHIP THAT WORKS

A Total (United) Team Approach

From left to right: Staci Lauinger, Dean of Students; Christine Del Pozo, Principal; Carolyn Coombs, Activities Director/AP; Ross Short, CTE Director

Carolyn Coombs

Assistant Principal/Activities Director, Stanwood High School, Stanwood

As a fairly new assistant principal, I still have much to learn. However, there's one thing I know for sure: After four years, I know with certainty having a healthy, functional administrative team is imperative, not only to the health of a building, but also to how well I am able to do my job.

Stanwood High School has about 1,300 students. We have AP, College in the High School, and myriad general education classes. We have a large CTE program, with one of the few machine shops left in the state. Our woodshop program will soon be home to a Geometry/Woodshop block to support real-world application to math and construction. Like every other high school in the state, we have a lot going on for administrators to be involved in, supervise, and oversee.

Depending on the time of year, our administrative team can be spread pretty thin. And yet, at no time during the year, do I feel alone or unsupported in any aspect of my job. Our team consists of a building principal, an athletic director/assistant principal, an activity director/assistant principal, a part-time dean of students, and a CTE director. Obviously, each of us has specific responsibilities we must accomplish over the course of a year, but more often than not, we share discipline issues, staff development opportunities, building supervision, and district responsibilities. Our campus is also home to the district alternative high school/middle school program. That school's building principal is considered another integral part of our team.

How do we accomplish this? Through a holistic, team approach to leadership. Our building principal, Christine Del Pozo, is committed to open and constant communication with all of us. We have an administrator meeting every

> ❝ Being a role model is the most powerful form of educating."

Monday morning at 6:30 a.m. to discuss the upcoming responsibilities for the week, (i.e. IEP meetings, observations, parent meetings, supervision, and any other issue that needs to be addressed). Days get busy and can be long or unpredictable, but most afternoons find some or all of our team in the office debriefing the day. The mutual respect each of us has for the other is fostered through our willingness to put the health of the team first.

Christine is well-known amongst principals in the WESCO league for her leadership. That leadership is what we see and benefit from every day. She encourages each of us to grow in our ability to lead others in our specific job-related areas and works alongside us on many occasions. It is rare for any of us

Tom Wilfong, Athletic Director, AP; Ryan Ovenell, Principal (Alternative HS/MS and Parent Partnership program)

to make a staffing, disciplinary, or academically-related decision without first consulting with each other.

Several years ago, a veteran administrator told me there can be no ego in the job of administrator. Only now do I understand how true that is. Students do not benefit from an admin team who is vying for recognition or power. Staff cannot feel safe or supported when they feel the administrative team is divided. In the words of the great John Wooden, "Being a role model is the most powerful form of educating."

Through Christine's leadership, we develop and grow as leaders, so we can in turn, support those we are leading. Stanwood High School is committed to our theme of Spartan United at every level: students, staff, administrators and community. A united approach is the only way to lead! ■