

FROM THE DESK OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

If I were to ask people how to improve education, I would probably get a variety of answers:

- a. Change the school year from its standard 9 months to year round with a 3 week break between each quarter.
- b. Move to a 4 day week.
- c. Eliminate grade levels and move to competency based movement.
- d. Redesign the grading system in a way that truly shows competency vs work.
- e. Move toward technology by using iPads or the like instead of textbooks.
- f. Have more individualized instruction.
- g. Allow students to graduate after they have reached a certain competency vs a certain grade.
- h. Eliminate services (immunizations, eye and ear exams, etc) as they take time away from education.
- i. Create a more individualized instruction.
- j. Redesign buildings allowing students a more relaxed atmosphere.
- k. Create parenting classes for people who have children so they know how to teach values and expectations.

These are just a few of the ideas I have heard in my tenure of education.

A person can find schools that are trying to do one or more the above. I don't know of one school that sits on its hands feeling that they have the perfect solution.

Schools are like people. They have problems and try to solve them in hopes that the solution will create a better school. Attempts at improvement are not always positive in everyone's eyes, but that does not mean a school is sitting on its hands and not trying. Some schools are more successful than others for a variety of reason, and there isn't a school that I know of that is perfect.

Concepts such as the common core standards, teacher evaluations, new accountability systems, RTI, Special Education, and civil rights standards are now being forced on schools at the same time schools are looking at themselves in different ways to improve. I look at this as the "perfect storm". What comes out of this storm is yet to be determined.

What I have learned over years is that the process of education is very fluid. Ideas come and go. Much has changed since I have started while many things have been tried only to revert back to what was done.

I would be the first to wave a magic wand and create the perfect school, but I'm not sure it would make everyone happy as their idea might differ from mine. That is why schools in different towns and states are different. Their priority is the same (education of students), but how they get there and where they are in terms of problems solved is much different.

I have come to the understanding that education in any community is successful when it accomplishes what it is the community as a whole wants. I understand this more each year at graduation. The smiles and pride of individuals and families at this time only tell me that people feel comfortable with the results, and students are happy when they receive that diploma. The future for both the schools and the graduates is another story which is yet to be told.