

HALF EMPTY OR HALF FULL?

When I reflect on the speed with which the 2007-2008 school year is passing, I am reminded of the popular phrase “half empty or half full.” With this school year already half completed, I think that “half empty” is probably a better description. You see, the first eighteen weeks of the school year have been completed. There is no way to get any of that time back to re-teach, re-learn, or re-do anything. The second semester is already underway as of January 17th.

The high school principals have already met with some of the central office staff and myself to discuss areas of need or possible concern for the 2008-2009 school year. They have already begun working on their master schedules for next year. We have discussed the Ohio Core Program, which will begin in earnest with the freshman class of 2010-2011. At this time, we don't see a great impact on the district with the implementation of this law, as our district is already in line with many of the prescribed aspects of this law.

The possibilities of distance learning were discussed. There seems to be a genuine interest, perhaps for the first time in quite a while, to offer one or more courses to all high school buildings via distance learning. Certainly, the technology upgrades that are about to occur at each of the high school buildings should make distance learning classes a more viable option. This would be true not only for any such courses that we might offer from within our school district, but the possibility of bringing in courses from outside our school district may also become an option. Since we live in such a global economy, the

possibility of bringing in courses in German, Indian, or Chinese becomes increasingly interesting to us.

The high school principals have some “assignments” to complete and report back on by late February. These assignments are all related to scheduling for 2008-2009, and I will be most anxious to hear from them as to what they are able to do along with their recommendations. As with any other such efforts, the goal is to provide the best learning opportunities for our students that we can provide with the funds available.

WOMEN’S INITIATIVE

The Adams County/Ohio Valley School District was selected to participate in the **Women’s Initiative**, a student-group from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology dedicated to encouraging women to pursue degrees and careers in engineering. During the week of January 28, 2008, two enthusiastic female students from the School of Engineering at MIT will be speaking with junior and senior high girls in each high school and the Career and Technical Center. These two presenters will share the excitement of careers in engineering, promoting the field of engineering as a career option for our district’s female students.

The Women’s Initiative program emphasizes the importance of creating personalized interactions between school-aged female students and college women. Organizers of the Women’s Initiative believe that school-aged students can identify more closely with college students than with college recruiters and industry professionals. Having an all

female audience also encourages girls to participate more openly and ask questions of the presenters. The enthusiasm shown by MIT women often reveals a new and different side of engineering to younger girls.

One of the goals of the Women's Initiative is to change the perceptions of pre-college women. To do this, presenters lead a stereotype-busting discussion of engineering and show the girls why they should consider the many fields of engineering as a career. Each session will have a unique slide presentation which explains what engineering actually is by giving examples of engineering projects. This helps students recognize that the world around us is filled with the products of engineers. The presentations also include hands-on activities to engage students in thinking about engineering concepts.

During the 2006-2007 school year, MIT received over 200 applications from schools across the country interested in participating in the Women's Initiative program. Fourteen schools were selected. During the 2007-2008 school year, Adams County/Ohio Valley Schools was one of only 11 schools from Hawaii to South Carolina selected for participation in this educational program. Selection for participation was based on the enthusiasm expressed in the responses to the online application.

The Women's Initiative is solely funded by corporate and private donations. The sponsored program allows the MIT students to travel to locations all across the United States, providing the presentation completely free to selected schools. Undergraduate and graduate MIT students in the fields of mechanical, materials science, computer

science, electrical, civil, environmental, ocean, and chemical engineering are selected to be presenters in the program.

Charles P. Kimble

Superintendent