

BOARD MEMBER SEAT OPEN

You may recall that at our regular January board meeting, Mrs. Joyce King resigned from her seat on the Board of Education. Mrs. King had served the district dutifully and faithfully during her tenure. Her service was appreciated, and the remaining board members have now filled that vacant seat. The deadline for someone to declare his or her interest was noon on Friday, February 11, 2005. The seated board members conducted interviews during a special meeting on February 14th. Now, let me tell you that being selected to fill an unexpired term on the Board of Education is a sweetheart of a deal, along with being an honor. As you have probably heard already, the board members selected Mr. Mike Hughes to fill the seat that was vacated by Mrs. King. Many thanks to all five individuals who applied and were interviewed to fill the open seat. Your quality and sincerity made the decision of the seated board members a difficult one.

Like anything else, being a school board member is not what it was fifty years ago, forty years ago, or even twenty years ago. As with everything else, being a board member has changed a lot over the years. Board members are faced with increased pressures from the Ohio Department of Education, from the United States Department of Education, from all sorts of special interest groups, and from parents and community members at large. People want to be heard, and they want to be heard now. People want their needs or desires met, and they want them met right now. One of the things that you quickly learn as a board member, superintendent, or building principal is that it is impossible to fulfill all of the desires of all of the people all of the time. In many cases, board members are restricted as to what they can or cannot do by the statutes.

At the January school board meeting, I shared with our board members notes and cards of thanks from some of the students and teachers in our school district. Most, if not all of these, came from elementary classrooms. In a very nice and professional gesture, the Ohio Valley Education Association recognized each of the board members with a special gift and recognition. When I think of all of the planning, studying, action, and responsibility associated with the job of being a school board member, I am often amazed that qualified persons are interested in serving. After all, it is rare that the job is either fun or stress free.

Though January is officially “School Board Recognition Month,” it is not improper, in my estimation, to show one’s appreciation to board members at any time of the year. Saying those two words, “thank you,” is not something that could or should be bound by a specific timeframe. We wish Mrs. King the best of luck in her future endeavors, just as we do Mr. Hughes, the new member on the board.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND THOUGHTS

Recently, I ran across a program on the C-SPAN channel. The subject of the program was the three-year-old federal law known as “No Child Left Behind” or NCLB. The program was actually set up as a business roundtable discussion. A series of national level politicians, both Democrats and Republicans, spoke on behalf of NCLB. In

addition, there were some State Superintendents of Public Instruction who spoke. They, too, were very supportive of much of what NCLB promotes through legislation.

Personally, I believe that all students can learn and that they can and do rise to our levels of expectation. Therefore, I see nothing wrong with the phrase “raising the bar” on student learning. I also believe that these things are true for all students, not just those who appear to be the best or most capable. Like the members of the discussion panel, I feel that while improvements have been made in funding this law, there are still gaps in state or federal funding that need to be addressed. As it stands now, local school districts are left to pick up part of the tab for the implementation of this law. Hopefully, since NCLB is a mandated law, the government will eventually fund the cost of full implementation. I also agree with the panelists who spoke on NCLB that some of the areas of expectations regarding student performance need to be revisited and adjusted. There are often problems with the enacting and implementation of any new law. However, I believe that the bottom line is that NCLB is a good law for the most part, and for the majority of people.

March will soon be upon us. What does that have to do with NCLB? A great deal of student /school accountability testing takes place in March. For the most part, March is the month where the rubber meets the road for students and school districts. As I travel about the district, I am pleased and impressed by the efforts of the majority of folks to successfully implement NCLB for all students. The staffs are energetic, caring, and thoughtful about students and NCLB, and they believe that all students can learn.

However, I also see on some of those same faces traces of hopelessness, despair, frustration, and worry. What do I believe to be the cause of this? I feel that it is due to a shortage of encouragement in the home.

You see, teaching staffs are more highly trained today than at any point in time in our history. There are also more demands and expectations placed in the hands of the schools than ever before. The schools only have 6-7 hours a day for 180 days out of the year to work with and prepare students for the demands of NCLB. A great deal of nurturing and preparation must take place in the home on a daily basis before we can ever really get to the point of No Child Being Left Behind. The thought or idea behind NCLB is a noble one. However, it does not legislate parent support for education in the home. It is just as important for this seed to be nurtured in the home as it is for the school to provide your child the information that he or she needs to grow into a productive member of adult society. One without the other is like having the glass half full or half empty.

I am not asking that you pick up a set of textbooks and try to reinforce the school's work at home. What I am asking is that all parents believe that education is important, that you share that belief with your children on a regular and ongoing basis, and that you stress the importance of your children developing a strong work ethic. These are the intangible factors that are not a part of the federal NCLB law, yet they are just as important as the words that are used in writing the law. In my humble opinion, if all parents don't stress these factors in the home, then the full effect proposed through the NCLB legislation may never be realized. This would be very unfortunate as the ideas expressed in this

paragraph would not cost one-cent of taxpayers' dollars to implement. So much rests on the family and the home. You don't have to be rich or have a college degree to do the things that I am asking. Anyone can do it.

March is testing month in many grade level areas. Please see to it that your child(ren) gets plenty of rest each and every night. See to it that they eat breakfast either at home or at school, and, above all, stress the importance to your child(ren) of doing the best that he/she can do each and everyday of the year. If all parents would do these things, then NCLB has a fighting chance of being successful.

Thank you.

Charles P. Kimble

Superintendent