

A GOOD PROGRAM EXPANDS

A couple of years ago, we began a Transitional First Grade class at West Union Elementary. The class was designed for those students who had completed kindergarten, but were not quite ready for the regular first grade class setting. The class size was kept small, and much energy was focused on areas where these students needed extra help in order to become better learners. It started with one class at WUE. In addition, a Transitional First Grade classroom was established at Peebles Elementary last year. The 2006-2007 school year will see Transitional First Grade classrooms at all three of our elementary schools.

However, that's not all. Each of our three elementary schools will also offer a Transitional Kindergarten program this school year. The Transitional Kindergarten classes will be based upon the same premise or foundation as the Transitional First Grade classroom. That is, taking students where they are developmentally, and helping them acquire the tools to become more successful learners through focused instructional efforts. I strongly believe that this effort has great potential for success. We have already observed this with our Transitional First Grade classrooms.

As taxpayers, you should know that we have not hired additional teachers to implement the transitional classroom approach. Rather, kindergarten and first grade teachers have been re-aligned in order to make way for these classrooms. The teachers in the transitional classrooms have voluntarily stepped forward to accept this challenge. Like

many of their peers, they have no doubt spent a great deal of time this summer preparing for the 2006-2007 school year.

Our teaching staff has put forth some extraordinary efforts over the past several months in an effort to improve the achievement of all students. The Short Cycle Assessment Project has taken a lot of time, energy, thought, cooperation, and collaboration. We could have taken a “short cut” with this project by simply using other districts’ work. However, that work wouldn’t have been “customized” for the needs of our students/district. Plus, our teachers and administrators would not have gotten the benefit of acquiring the knowledge base about student learning and SCAs without having done the work themselves. This project will make those involved stronger teachers and our students will become better learners as a result of this.

During the early part of my professional career, it was not uncommon to hear this phrase, “Those who can, do; those who can’t, teach.” I always cringed when I heard that statement because it was a slap in the face to my chosen profession. Like people in any other profession, we have times when we drop the ball. We address our mistakes. We learn from our shortcomings, and we try not to repeat them. We have in excess of 500 employees in this school district. They all have tough, demanding jobs, whether they are teachers, bus drivers, aides, or whatever. For the most part, I am very proud of their efforts to be professional about their jobs. This definitely would include our classified, certified, and administrative staffs. A friend of mine, who happens to be just one of the school district’s outstanding teachers, once shared with me a new version of that old

saying that I referenced at the beginning of this paragraph. It goes something like this, “If you can, teach; if you can’t, do something less demanding and stressful.” One thing is for certain, anyone in any profession who is doing an outstanding job is doing so under a certain amount of stress. For the new school year, I want to welcome back not only our students and their parents, but our employees as well.

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Students in grades 1-8, and their parents, who need a less “traditional” educational approach are reminded that the Adams County/Ohio Valley School District offers Virtual Learning Academy (VLA). All you need is a computer and internet access. Students in grades 9-12 have the alternative educational option of American School. This is basically a correspondence school offering where a student can earn a high school diploma. Students involved with alternative educational programs are required to actively participate in the state testing programs.

Students, and their parents, who are interested in either of these programs should contact Mr. Richard Shoemaker, Director, at 544-4431. Any student planning to enroll full time in either of these programs should do so immediately.

If you have any questions about this week’s article, feel free to contact me at 544-5586.

Thank you.

Charles P. Kimble, Superintendent