



DeKalb Independent School District

Committed to Excellence

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*David Manley,
Superintendent*

I am going to post a monthly newsletter on the district's website. They will deal with ideologies within or school system and how our schools are evolving. DeKalb ISD has many wonderful and effective programs that need to be brought back into the limelight also. A little bragging if you don't mind. All will be addressed to the best of my ability over the coming school year. The following is the first installment of these newsletters. It deals with the need for parental support within our schools. It will also explain the mindset of our staff and changes they are going through for the success of our students. I am not pointing any fingers, just giving an idealist view of what is needed to ensure a proper education of our young people.

A child uneducated is an adult taken care of. It is a bold, in your face statement I know, but so true. I cannot take credit for it, but fully agree with it. Education opens the doors of opportunity for each child. It breaks the cycle of poverty, despair and dependence on others in latter life. Every child that leaves school before graduation has a 50% better chance of living below the poverty level than their high school graduate counterparts. It is the responsibility of every adult that a child comes in contact with to ensure they are educated. This primarily includes family, the community and teachers. Hillary Clinton once used the old African proverb of: "it takes a village to raise a child". I have to agree with this especially as it relates to education. A proper education of a child has to have the village built by the educational community. The members of this community are the architects and builders of this village. They design the blueprints, build the structures and provide the fodder needed for learning. The original blueprint has to be adjusted for each child of the village. Always remembering each one is still an individual within the group.

A parent is the first teacher a child has and the most influential. Parents should take ownership of their child's education from day one. They should expect not only the most out of their child's school, but out of the child as well. First and foremost parents have to ensure their child is attending school not just enrolled. To be successful a child must attend school, not allowed to miss unnecessarily. They should expect their children to put their all into school and learn what is presented. Making a certain grade is not as important as knowledge gained. A grade of 95 means nothing if only useless information is gained. However, a grade of 75 is priceless if true knowledge was obtained. A parent should start at home by reinforcing what is learned at school and expanding it. Always checking on what the child did at school that day and never believe that nothing was accomplished as your child may want you to believe. A parent should make reasonable demands on their child and school. A school should be always striving to be better. It should never rest on its haunches, relishing only on past performances. As a parent work positively with your child's teachers and school to help build a strong educational foundation. A study was done on students who dropped out of high school. 68% of them said their parents only got involved after they became aware that their child may drop out. Do not wait until this point

start early and stay the course. Together this is an intricate part of the process. Sometimes the students will balk at it all and it ceases to be enjoyable for anyone. Nobody said being a parent or a teacher was going to be easy.

Teachers must also demand the most of their students. Teachers have to learn to teach individuals as a group and a group as individuals. They must find the “on switch” of each student and turn the light on. It is essential from the teacher’s perspective to have an open honest line of communication with the parents, working diligently with them for student success. Once again it is all about the success of the student not just the grade. With the technology available today education has been enhanced tremendously. We live in an age of instantaneous information. Everything is available at the touch of a button. With the invention of computers, internet, cell phones, and calculators to name a few, information comes quickly. By having information so readily available we now have a very impatient generation to educate. True learning takes time. It cannot be downloaded into our brains for immediate retrieval. With the time it takes to learn new material today’s student tends to get bored and shutdown. Teachers are constantly altering their delivery method to engage student into the learning process. It seems to be developing into lessons surrounded by short snippets of information to keep students interest. I heard this in its rawest form at home one day and truly understood how it was changing. There was a kid’s show on television in another room. I heard what was going on without seeing it, which heightened my awareness. Everything that happened was in 5 second bursts. It might be music or a joke or skit but the one constant was it was always changing and quickly. This keeps the kids off guard and glued to the set. They never have time to really think just immediate stimulation and on to the next. All teachers have to learn from this. These types of shows on television seem to be developing new learning styles in students. It is a style which gives immediate gratification and changes constantly to keep their attention. Teachers must grasp these styles and alter their delivery methods to be successful.

There is a natural ebb and flow to education. Constantly checking for success and changing as needed. It is a place where parent and teachers work together to understand the needs of their student and to develop programs for their success. Students have to understand the concepts of the information and the impact it has on them. The worse thing anyone can do in educating children is to consider that the regurgitation of information without understanding is the gaining of knowledge. Let’s all work together for the betterment of our school and for the future of our children. If you have any questions about your child’s education please contact the principal of your child’s school.

David Manley
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