

Whitehall School District

District Administrator's Annual Report
2015

A Proud Tradition in Trying Times

Overall Observations:

- Our schools, the folks we have working in them and our facilities are being asked to do more for our children and for our community than at any time in modern history. We remain committed to continuing to meet these needs with all that we can possibly offer.
- This desire, coupled with the manner in which our District has handled the continual challenges to the very ideal of public education, leads me to believe that we can take great pride in our valued educators and those that support them.
- I continue to be extremely encouraged by our schools, by our staff and by the extended community of which we serve.
- This is a great place to live, to learn and to work and I see no reason for that to change if we meet our challenges face to face and make decisions based on well established common goals and ideals that are based in futuristic thinking and honest communication.

Specific Observations:

- Data is being used more effectively than ever to establish and track individualized learning but compassion and passion cannot be underestimated.
- Individualized needs are being effectively blended into the overall aspect of our schools, but doing so is difficult and may become increasingly unpopular.
- We continue to experience an increase in student diversity as well as a significant number of students experiencing and dealing with mobility issues.
- Resources continue to tighten as expectations continue to increase - what is the end game?

Specific Observations: (cont.)

- Local community support appears as strong or stronger than ever!
- We remain focused on involving our collective community in the educational process of its children.
- As a local, state and national society, we need to be more engaged in understanding the underlying background for decision making by our elected leaders and this can begin at school but must include all of us.

Issues of concern for the future

- reform fatigue
- continued erosion of public school ideals and funding with voucher expansion
- middle class fatigue and citizenship apathy
- assessment overload and hypersensitivity based in individual thinking and need for recognition
- willingness of gifted people to enter the field of teaching
- continued political gamesmanship with education as a game piece (sound bytes)
- the reality of an extremist world appears to be gaining traction in our society - it is no longer okay to disagree or have different beliefs without hatred and/or violence

Reasons for confidence in our future:

- dramatic support from our local communities
- increased efficiency of operation in a comprehensive 4K-12 building and taking on a greater role in the community with questions centered around the future of the City Center / Life Center
- we have a tremendous staff of people that care dramatically for our school, for its children and for one another
- we have a collective willingness to adjust to an ever-changing environment to best serve the needs of children and our communities - but we at school cannot do it alone.

What's next?

- Understanding the full implications of current legislative decision making as it relates to Public Education and our current society
- working with our citizens to best serve the needs of both our children and the communities that make up our school district
- continued support is necessary for our school staff as they do this most important but often misunderstood work - what are the repercussions of anything but support?

What's next? (cont.)

- working with all of our citizens to improve upon the extremist and self-centered world that is becoming all too common
- focussing on the return to a quality of life that has now been eroded by a multitude of factors
- instructional focus on what truly impacts the positive development of our children -- at times in direct conflict with politics

What's next? (cont.)

- continued work to identify a model of education that can adequately meet the needs and expectations placed upon our system
- the development of an understanding of what appears to be a systematic change in the model of school finance where referenda may become a regular, if not annual, part of our landscape

Conclusion:

The Whitehall School District and its staff remains committed to doing what is right for our children and our citizens. In order to effectively implement this continued vision, we must engage all in our community in our youth as well as in a discussion of what is truly necessary for success and a quality of life that I believe many are either consciously or subconsciously yearning for. Continuation down a path of extremist thinking and behavior, narcissistic focus and greed-based decision making may well create issues that one cannot and will not see for at least another generation, but long-term disaster may well come if we remain silent and do not at least engage a conversation of what we really want for our children and our future.