

Providing opportunities requires planning

Written by Supt. Bret Miles, Holyoke School Dist. Re-1J

"It takes a village to raise a child" is a familiar saying, and one that carries a slightly different message depending upon the individual hearing it.

To some of us it reminds us of why we want to live in a small town, so when our child is caught doing something she or he is not supposed to do, someone else will recognize them and let us know with a quick phone call. For others, I am sure the term village brings to mind a support system that rallies around others in need.

Public education has always embodied the village concept, because it takes the combination of parents, teachers, the school system and a supportive community to provide opportunities and set high expectations for our students to achieve.

Providing opportunities and setting high expectations require planning. Somewhere in this busy first month, many individuals have found the time to come together on four important planning teams that will focus on setting high expectations and providing opportunities for learning in our school district. Teachers, classified staff, parents and members of the business community are joining the Board and administration on many teams designed to provide input and shared leadership in critical areas.

The Teacher Leadership Team has a focus on curriculum. Teachers, representing the many grade levels and departments, meet monthly to improve our curriculum and to focus teacher training. We can't make an impact on all students without focusing on both what and how we teach. This group is charged with listening to their colleagues to identify ways we can systematically improve curriculum and instruction.

The Superintendent's Advisory Committee has been created for a focus on employees. This group meets monthly with me to discuss any issues that may impact the work environment. We may discuss policies, procedures, budgets or even just problem-solve issues that arise on occasion, with the goal being open communication between the district employees and administration. b

The Budget and Facilities Committee had its first meeting this month as well. This group of teachers, classified staff, parents, and business community has joined the Board and administration to focus on providing the best resources for learning. They spent their first meeting learning about the school budget and Colorado school finance in general. Later in the year, this group will make recommendations to the Board as the budget is being developed.

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The final district-wide committee is the Standard of Excellence Team. This is another group made up of teachers, classified staff, parents and representatives from local businesses. The team will be creating our own measuring stick to see how our schools are doing with our core mission of teaching and learning. There are many ways to measure the quality of a school district, and this group will determine which criteria matters most to our community.

The work is just beginning for the year. Together, these groups embody the “village” concept providing the district with the unique perspectives from educators, parents and the community on the critical issues associated with our mission: curriculum and instruction, resources and accountability.

While our work has just begun, I would like to say thank you to the staff, parents and members of the business community who have taken the time to join the Board of Education and administration on one of our key shared leadership teams. You truly embody the spirit of, “It takes a village to raise a child” and our district is better off because you are contributing.