

Lock Down

On Monday we have a lock-down in response to an active shooter drill/training held at Riverdale Schools. While the fact remains that it is troublesome that we live in such an era, this drill provided us the opportunity to test our own lockdown procedures early in the year with little warning – not unlike a real event. Our students and staff followed procedure and were safe and secure in short order. While providing an excellent education is our goal, our top priority remains keeping our kids as safe as possible.

Education Policy

Over the past several weeks I've had the opportunity to be involved in several state level meetings with other superintendents from across the state, legislators, and gubernatorial candidates. One group of superintendents continues to work on putting together a strategic plan/mission for Ohio's schools – in simple terms, a document which will outline what ideals ALL stakeholders (school officials, parents, business, etc.) hold as the goal of education. This work began last year and this year the group will be engaging a wider audience to continue to solicit feedback and input on what the mission should look like in each individual community. The ultimate goal with this grassroots effort is to have something to point to when legislators veer off course and propose legislation that is harmful to schools, students, and local communities. If you've followed my updates for the past year or two you've seen a trend that legislation is proposed, it doesn't work and causes many problems for school and students, and then new legislation is introduced to fix the first legislation – causing a confusing maze for educators to follow, effectively, chasing their own tails!

We've already seen some success in working with legislators in the form of SB 216 (just signed into law by Gov. Kasich) which provided some relief from unnecessary mandates and provided for a slight increase in local control. There remains much to be done, though, and you can be a part of this effort. For instance, Ohio legislators introduced Graduation Requirements last year that would have created a situation where 30-40% of seniors would not have graduated – through almost no fault of their own. Once legislators realized the fiasco they had created they scramble to create new legislation that effectively "paused" the requirements for one year. The issue is that no one at the state level did anything in that moratorium period to fix the issue and now the legislation is back in effect – with, again, approximately 30-40% of seniors across the state not being eligible for graduation. While Cory-Rawson is impacted significantly less by this legislation, much like many other NW Ohio school districts, it remains a concern that legislators have imposed legislation in an effort to *improve* graduation without thinking about *how* to improve graduation.

The other part of our discussions at the state level has centered on building relationships with the gubernatorial candidates to provide for a collaborative effort for the next 4 years of education policy. One interesting theme from these, and other discussions at the state level, is that many recognize that the School Report Cards are not measuring what matters. The Report Card measures a one-time score from students. It does not provide for timely feedback to students or teachers to change how and what they teach. If tests are not intended to help us and our students improve, then we have to ask what they are doing for us. Additionally, in talking with the business community we hear time and again that they aren't concerned with the Report Card – they're concerned with the soft skills that students need to be successful in work and life (**strong work ethic, positive attitude, good communication skills, time management abilities, problem-solving skills, acting as a team player, self-confidence, and ability to accept and learn from criticism**). Ironically, the very tests the state use to measure us and our students provide no focus on these skills and, in fact, actually act to inhibit the teaching of these skills.

So, you might ask, what can I do – how can I make a difference? First, I'd suggest calling your legislators to let them know that the current graduation requirements are going to harm more students across Ohio more than they help. Think of your own experiences. You may not have been in the top half of your graduating class – you may even have been near the bottom. Yet, you have led a successful life. The government doesn't always know what's right for every student – to see evidence of this just look at the start of Gov. Kasich's term when he said every student

needed to go to college to be successful. Now, at the end of his term his focus has changed to put a spotlight on Career-Tech education where students learn specific trade skills. What else can you do to change the course of education policy in Ohio? Stay tuned to my updates for future news on legislation and how it might impact our school, students, and community...and be willing to contact legislators to let them know your thoughts. Your voice, as a community member really has an impact on legislators – let it be heard!

Kudos!

Earlier this week the girls' soccer team tallied an impressive win over Cardinal Stritch. Grace Roebke had 3 goals for a hat trick, while Zoe Chisholm, Libby McVetta, and Alyssa Shoemaker all had 2 goals, and Faith Sammet scored once. Great job girls!

Congratulations to Mr. Holland for his recognition as a semifinalist for the Findlay/Hancock County Golden Apple Award sponsored by the Findlay Rotary Club! What a great honor!

Good Luck!

Good luck to the football team as they kick-off the season against Bluffton! On Saturday the Cross-Country team will travel to the Seneca East Invite, while the girls' soccer team will travel to Liberty Center. Go Hornets!

Hancock County Fair

Next week will mark the start of our Fair Week, where many of our students from young to old will put their talents and hard work on display in the various venues. I encourage you to visit and see all that our kids have done and how well they represent themselves, our school, and our community! Don't forget to stop by the CR Fair Tent to enjoy a great meal or snack!