

The Cat's Tale

November 2011

One of the responsibilities of the superintendent is to keep an eye on the pulse of the students and staff, and when I say pulse, I really mean their energy levels.

Experienced administrators tell me that they can tell when the weather changes and when the moon is full by the actions of the people around them. There may be something to this.

A school's calendar is designed around the seasons, holidays and the events in a school year. It is also designed around the energy levels of students and staff. When a school has a break, it is most often needed. I am a proponent of "quality" and not "quantity" when it comes to the educational process. We want our students and staff to be focused and give their best efforts. Without breaks and milestones, they can and will lose their focus.

I commend our students and staff for their focus thus far this school year. I believe they have worked hard and that we are moving in a positive direction. I want them to have a joyous and restful break. They have worked hard and they need it. They will come back after the break to a very busy time of year. They will need this rest because I am asking something more of them. I want them to FINISH! I want them to stay focused on the goals we set at the beginning of the year. I want them to FINISH the semester giving all that they have.

We have come this far with great effort. Teachers, continue to teach with enthusiasm and zest. Push hard and FINISH! Students, you have studied hard and hopefully earned good marks through the year. I hope you are growing academically, socially, and through your activities. I ask you to push yourselves and FINISH! Push yourselves academically. Focus on growing and developing your skills and abilities. FINISH! If you do, your breaks will be happier and more restful knowing that you did your best and gave a great effort. FINISH!

We are facing many challenges in public education. As you could probably guess, I am a strong advocate of public education. A free public education is one of the great things about our country in that ALL children have the opportunity for an education. No matter of race, creed, socio-economic background, or parental status in the world, a child has that opportunity. It is up to each individual whether or not to take advantage of that free education. It is up to each individual whether or not to succeed.

Unfortunately, those opportunities for ALL students are currently under attack. The establishment of Private and Charter schools is simply a clever way to circumvent those opportunities for our children. Proponents of these types of schools would like to divert tax dollars away from public schools where ALL students have the same opportunities and send them to private school where only the "select" are served. A charter school is a clever way to disguise the separation of students while creating a separate set of rules when the rest of us have to abide by more stringent rules.

Proponents want to divert tax dollars to their private schools while crying "school choice." Because they choose not to send their children to public school, they believe that their tax dollars should not go to public school but instead to their private school. Let's look at this thought process with some other examples. By their logic or way of thinking, we could all ask: Why do my tax dollars go to the fire department? I have not had a fire at my house. I do not use the police, OSBI, highway patrol, etc. There are many roads and bridges that neither myself nor my family drive on. Why do I have to pay for them?

The reality is that our local fire and police departments risk their lives to serve ALL of us. With tremendous dedication and service, they along with many other local agencies serve our ENTIRE community. I gladly pay taxes for the greater good of ALL of us. We all benefit from these services even though we may not always realize it. Whether or not we are directly using the Fire Department, Police Department, or driving on those roads and bridges, they benefit us...our neighbors...our community. All of us!

Just as Public Education benefits ALL of us! All of our children deserve an education--not just the wealthy, not just the privileged, and not just those who meet certain "criteria." In public education, we open our doors to ALL children, but you can be assured that private and charter schools do not! So when you hear talk about "School Choice," look beyond what you hear and ask yourself what is the benefit to those who are saying it?

I want to congratulate our football team, coaches and staff on their season. As I write this, we just defeated Tuttle for our first playoff win in several years. GO CATS!

Our next opponent is Heritage Hall, an elite private school. Their students are from the greater Oklahoma City area and beyond. The tuition at Heritage Hall is approximately \$18,000.00 per year; however, some of their athletes receive scholarships.

I am proud that the vast majority of our team has played together for many years. They have grown up together playing Lion's Club and middle school football together. They are well coached and prepared. They play hard and fast, and they are more than capable.

I ask only one thing of them.....FINISH!

Mr. Tuck