



Take time to determine whether your school is effective

COMMUNITY VIEW • By SONDRAM. SHIPPEN • February 21, 2010

Each day, parents throughout the state demonstrate a high commitment to their role of parenting children by helping them to prepare for school.

This preparation can take many forms, dependent on the age and grade level of the student. The parents' overall expectation is the same, however; the student, once in school, will acquire the skills that will enable him/her to become successful in life's journey toward maturity and success.

Here in Delaware, the Charter School Network has worked to establish what I will call guideposts to assist parents in knowing what to look for when trying to assess quality in your school.

Good quality has many facets, too numerous to mention in this brief article, however; there are several items that push to the top when one considers what makes a good school. These include well run, fiscally sound institutions where everyone is equally engaged and the machinery of operating the school works. Everyone feels like a part of a master design that helps children.

Over the past several months, The Delaware Charter School Network movement has worked to identify and put forward an agenda that will give the public an understanding of what to look for in trying to determine whether your son/daughter's school is in the process of becoming world class. This process has become known as identifying quality indicators.

In the Network, quality indicators align with the criteria outlined by the National Building Charter Schools' Quality Project. These indicators address practices that will help Delaware schools to become world-class educational institutions for our children. As you may be aware, the Obama administration has placed a high priority on

education, and a high value on making sure that schools are held accountable -- really accountable for the education of our young people. How better to hold up our end than by putting tools in place to make sure we are on the right road -- a road to excellence.

Four indicators for effectiveness

These indicators can be used by anyone to determine the effectiveness of your child's school. The four indicators are straightforward and include:

- Student achievement -- What does my school testing show me about where my child is when scored against other students nationally?
- Community support -- How involved am I in what is taking place and more so, do I feel like I have a say? Am I able to voice my opinion and have thoughtful, deliberate conversations regarding differing points of view?
- A well-informed governing board is critical. Individuals who are elected or selected to represent you and your children in the education arena MUST be advocates who understand children come first. I personally enjoy sharing with my staff. We get into trouble when we forget who we are working for -- not politicians, not families, not groups of individuals with vested interests, but children. Our population is a very vulnerable one that looks to us to make sure they are respected and protected. For

Advertisement

BE A PART OF HISTORY
Follow the 2010 Winter Games

View photo galleries, blogs, instant results, video reports and more.

vancouver

CLICK HERE

USA TODAY
usatoday.com

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™



us to do anything less in the governance of educational institutions borders on criminal behavior.

- Fiscal Responsibility -- As a taxpayer, I want to ensure my funds are addressing the concept of making my school better. How is this being done? Is my school keeping up with technology and making sure the ongoing curricula or path of study meets both state and national requirements? Have we created a system where our children have been offered the skills that prepare them for competing in the global market or is it more of the same with minimum change because that would be too challenging?

If you stop to look at these quality indicators, a road map to a good school shows itself quickly.

As committed parents and responsible taxpayers, several factors are clear and the indicators demonstrate a pressing need.

- We do not have the luxury of supporting poorly run institutions -- too much is at stake. Provide appropriate administrative support where necessary and move forward.
- The support given to high-quality schools must be universal and set a tone for increasing better and better performance -- this means looking for more ways to encourage excellence; and it means constantly striving for ways to ensure your child leaves you each day and moves to an **environment** where they feel respected and protected because they are becoming world-class students, and as their parents, you have helped to create and support this system of change!

Advertisement

An advertisement for the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games. The background is a light blue map of North America with a white mountain range silhouette. At the top, the text reads 'BE A PART OF HISTORY' in large blue letters, followed by 'Follow the 2010 Winter Games' in smaller blue letters. Below this is the Vancouver logo, which consists of a red maple leaf, a blue mountain peak, and a green mountain peak. To the right of the logo, the text says 'View photo galleries, blogs, instant results, video reports and more.' At the bottom left, there is a blue button with the text 'CLICK HERE'. At the bottom right, there is the USA Today logo with the website address 'usatoday.com' below it.

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™