

**8/25/2010**

### **Talking Education w/ G9**

Recently, one of our local citizens who has no children in school told me that I needed to better communicate with folks like her. She mentioned that a previous superintendent, Dr. Eric Kleinstiver, had written a monthly column and suggested that I do the same. I appreciate her suggestion, and our newspaper has graciously agreed to print my comments monthly. I thank them for doing so.

While the column's purpose is to inform the public about the District's direction and the various programs being offered to provide our students with the curriculum they need to succeed, this first column will address leadership.

Organizations and businesses, whether large or small, do not succeed without effective leadership. Effective leadership, regardless of what book you read or speaker you hear, demands that the following five bases are covered:

1. The leader must establish a common vision for the organization. That vision creates a focus in the organization that all can clearly grasp. In FUSD, our vision is KIDS FIRST.
2. Somehow, someday, the leader must give meaning to that vision by communicating the vision in a manner such that everyone in the organization buys in; it is said that the vision must "permeate" the organization.
3. The leader must earn trust daily, within the organization and in the community where they function. Trust is the glue that holds good organizations together, for without trust, ultimately the organization will fail. In short, integrity matters.
4. The leader must exhibit personal regard for others. In other words, people have to know they are important and that somebody actually cares about them as individuals.
5. The leader must be forever positive; the cup must always be half-full, never half-empty.

Great leaders make great things happen. My task as superintendent of FUSD #1 is not only to lead the district's 8,500 kids and 1,000 employees well, it is also to ensure that we find school principals, department heads, and teachers that have the ability and the orientation to lead effectively.

Today, in FUSD, we have two high schools, seven K-8 schools, an alternative school, a school for emotionally handicapped kids, and a virtual academy. For the first time in my administrative career I can honestly say that we have effective leaders at each site.

Also, we believe that teachers are the Chief Executive Officers of their classrooms and their effective leadership is clearly evident when we see kids showing trust and respect for their teachers.

Under the Board's direction, we have worked hard to become a trustworthy organization, sharing a common vision and living it daily. What we do in our schools and classrooms and how we treat our children is daily evidence of leading to a common vision, KIDS FIRST.

I hope you agree that we have made significant progress in providing a positive educational environment focused on high expectations for our communities' children. In my opinion we have established a strong foundation upon which excellence will be built.

If you would like to tour any school in the district to see what education looks like today for kids in FUSD, please call Jan at 520-866-3501 and she will arrange a tour for you. After your tour, I'm betting you'll agree that you just witnessed some pretty effective leadership.

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