

Open Community Letter
February 2010

The Dundee Community School District is appreciative of the attendance at our public forum. We asked for and received input. All ideas and comments are being reviewed. Some suggestions are not feasible, others are already in place. In the process, we have a number of good ideas. Thank You! The focus of this letter is an old topic from a different perspective: the future.

Former President Calvin Coolidge once stated that, "The business of America is business." He was stating a focus and a vision. As an educator, it is my belief that the business of schools is education and the focus of education is children. That being said, let's talk again about the future.

As we heard on the 1st of February, the economic projections are not good. We are challenged to make an appropriate response to the actions of fans, students, peers, parents and politicians. The future will soon be the present so my message for February may surprise you.

Better days are ahead if we shift our emphasis. Let us not dwell on the present or the darkness of the future. Let us gather our courage and despite the circumstances plan for the future with HOPE.

Please permit me to frame the word HOPE. It lies in attitudes. The public forum asked us to consider a theme of "Together, we can!" That is a hopeful attitude. When asked to consider baseball's homerun hitters we might think of Babe Ruth and Hank Aaron. Do we consider that these Sultans of Swat were also the strikeout leaders on their teams? Do we realize that, despite their homeruns, all team members contributed to each and every win?

At Dundee Community Schools we have a history of achievement which gives us a basis for HOPE. We have outstanding teachers, administrators and support staff who have been improving student success year after year. There are countless examples of selfless contributions on behalf of students and their education. Our community stands up time after time in support of disasters, not just here in Dundee but also around the world; most of these activities are organized and supported by our staff.

As individuals, we can focus on despair concerning the behavior of others, the finances of the State, the requests for concessions or the hardship of the economy. I am suggesting that we utilize our assets in the area of attitudes and plan for success; hope for the future and a team approach is an attitude that is worth catching. Our hopeful attitudes are contagious.

As I look around, I see those positive attitudes when a basketball player helps an opponent up or congratulates them on fine efforts. I see them in parent volunteers at countless settings. I see them in students' faces who are excited about the prospect of the future. Our administrators put in long hours and respond to many issues because they believe in children and student success. Staff members go on overnight trips without compensation so that students can broaden their experiences. Custodians clean the same surfaces day after day so that a healthy learning environment can be maintained. Together, we are already accomplishing remarkable things.

Truly, there are better days ahead! Our legacy needs to be student success. Let us point to the outfield with confidence, knowing there are many more homeruns to be considered than strikeouts. The Students and communities of the Great Depression won a World War, a Cold War and built a better future. During that time of much more severe economic crisis, students and communities stood together to counter FEAR with HOPE. There was less for all of them but they looked beyond the present. They achieved great things despite hard times. Together, we can too!