



CHARTING A NEW COURSE FOR LEARNING

Dr. Charles Pearson, Interim Superintendent • 3855 Lucas & Hunt Rd. • St. Louis, MO 63121 • www.normandyssc.org

Letter to the Editor/St. Louis Post Dispatch
May 1, 2015

This is Unacceptable

If one were to walk through the schools in the Normandy Schools Collaborative, you would see instances of effective instruction. Yet, it also becomes evident that there are serious inconsistencies from classroom to classroom. A classroom without a permanent teacher; another classroom where there was no focus in instruction and students milled casually despite the efforts of their teacher to present material; a classroom where the teacher openly said, “I have given up. I am done for the year.”

This is unacceptable for the children served by our district. Regardless of how long it has taken for this situation to develop, regardless of the good intentions of some, it is inexcusable that any child should have to endure such a learning environment.

This reality requires us to aggressively address the very academic culture of the district. It requires both leadership and the educational staff to put in place the necessary systems that are needed to improve instruction for the 3500 children we serve. The solution to the district’s academic dilemma is four-fold. We must act with urgency by doing the following:

- Support effective principals that will create and sustain a school culture that provokes learning from all children.
- Recruit, equip and retain a strong teaching staff that is able to address the issues associated with generational poverty and its impact on the academic achievement of students.
- Teach, using research-based strategies that accelerate learning for all children while engaging them in the process.
- Foster safe learning environments for our children and educational staff who come to school daily.

Additionally, we are addressing issues surrounding staff performance at all levels. Performance goals have been set for struggling educators. Feedback is given to improve instruction and classroom management. Instructional staff have been coached up or coached out in preparation for the 2015-2016 school year. We are also actively recruiting retired educators to serve as supportive coaches for the remainder of the current school year.

Within the next few weeks, the Normandy Schools Collaborative will unveil a new plan to restructure the district that will support the learning environment our children deserve and our community demands. To do anything less, is indeed, unacceptable.

Charles J. Pearson, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent
Normandy Schools Collaborative