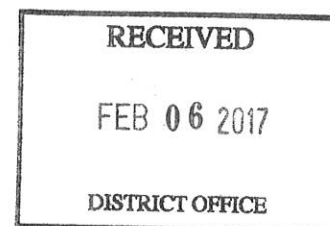


Feb. 1, 2017



Dr. Cox:

In Minidoka County where only 76% of the population completed high school, teachers were held in high esteem by community members. Teachers were respected by others involved in the educational system. Or so it seemed until recently.

While speaking of your respect for teachers, your actions show differently. Emailing staff and telling them they should be at school after sending students home for bad roads shows this lack of respect. We have lived in this community for many years. We know what roads will be bad in storms. We know when we should be home.

Touring buildings at 6:30 pm on parent teacher conferences to see if teachers are present shows a lack of respect. Many teachers come early, stay late on other days, or sacrifice lunchtime to meet with parents who could not visit the school on the appointed day. Some teachers are still at the school until after 8:00 to meet the needs of our parents.

The proposed 2017-18 calendar shows a lack of respect for teachers by requiring professional development time and holiday issues. Teachers are expected to be in school on the day before Thanksgiving for professional development while students are home. Students and certified have January 2 off while teachers are being trained. Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled for Mondays with a 12 hour day followed by 4 full teaching days.

Teachers must be continually trained? We are professionals. We have college degrees. We enroll in classes during the summer. We take classes after school. If we do voice our opinions that are not 'your' opinion, we are told we don't understand. Training teachers with early release and days out of school is your idea, not teachers. Please take ownership of your plan so community members know it is your idea to train teachers and not the demand of teachers.

Teachers are not to blame for the low test scores in the district. We don't take the tests. Teachers strive to provide the best education and preparation for students. Society now has high expectations with little or no work. Teachers are told we should not give zeros for missing assignments; it is too hard to make raise grades. Students should not be given homework because parents don't want to deal with it. Teachers should only praise and encourage students because disciplining a student could hurt their feelings. Teachers should not give consequences for bad choices or poor behavior.

Teachers build relationships with their students. Many teachers attend basketball games, wrestling matches, football games, concerts and numerous other activities in support of their students and coworkers. This is done on our time, not school hours. We buy dance tickets, Girl Scout cookies, or wreaths (the list is endless) to support our students and community.

The lack of respect from the superintendent is becoming evident in the community. For years at church parents tell me their child is so excited to be in my class. This week I heard several times "Just how much training do teachers need?"

I love teaching. I love my students. A little respect from the superintendent would be appreciated!