

MONDAY MESSAGE

FROM DR. MCFARLAND



Other People's Children

February 5, 2018

I recently had the opportunity to participate in a Twitter chat sponsored by the Texas Alliance of Black School Educators. The first question we chatted about was, "Why does the achievement gap exist?" This is a great question, and it generated a lot of tweets. It is a difficult question to answer in 140 characters or less.

For me, the most simple and straightforward answer I could come up with is that **the achievement gap exists because, from a systems standpoint, we have not always done for other people's children what we expect to be done for our own.** It is one thing for us to say that all students can learn, but it is an entirely different thing to proclaim they all will learn, and we will accept the responsibility to ensure that it happens.

With our own children, nieces, nephews and grandchildren, we want the very best for them, and we are willing to take intentional actions to increase the likelihood that they experience the best. I am proud and thankful to serve in a district led by board members, and alongside other educators, who truly want for other people's children that which they want for their own. I thank you for your daily efforts in this work.



I am convinced that the deliberate actions we are taking today will lead to closing the achievement gaps in Crowley ISD. In a short period of time, I have observed many of you committed to the cause and going above and beyond to connect with families, highlight student successes and create optimum conditions for learning to occur. I have had the opportunity to visit several campuses and observe teaching and learning, participate in family learning nights, speak with students at the Technology Expo, observe MyChoice Program presentations, mock trial competitions, an AVID demonstration tour and observe student presentations in the Crowley Collegiate Academy. As I navigated through the different events, the excitement and sense of pride I saw and felt was refreshing, and it reminded me of the many actions that you are taking to ensure success for the students we serve. Your actions, your perspective, your mindset and your intentions matter.

I truly believe that the issue with closing the achievement gap is about courage, will and intentionality – all of which I have witnessed from many colleagues throughout this district.

I am witnessing campus principals who are stepping up and leading and allowing others to do the same. Teachers have courageously admitted that they needed help and are receiving it from our professional development department. We have seen campus leadership teams working with district leadership to develop comprehensive action plans to provide interventions for students. In addition, the Central Office curriculum staff has spent many hours working with teachers as they develop and implement new curriculum systems and tools that will make our efforts more effective and efficient. The results are not readily apparent and success will not be immediate, but progress will occur if we stay the course. The reality is, we are not only tweeting about the issue, but we are intentionally taking actions to address the gaps and create the conditions for success.

I know that we are in a stressful time of the year right now. I encourage you to reflect on all of the intentional things we have done to get us to this point and know that it takes all of us working with passion and intensity to accomplish the objective before us. My expectations are high, but it is my desire for the students in the Crowley Collegiate Academy, Crowley Learning Center, David L. Walker Intermediate School and every other campus in our district to have the very best we can provide.

As we have made decisions in the past, I have asked myself what do I want for my children, Kharis, Michiah, Tyler and Jarret, and that is what I am striving to provide for all the 15,330 students we serve today in Crowley ISD. I want the very best for my children, and I want the very best for other people's children as well.

As we continue along our path of transformation, I want each of you to ask yourself these questions:

- Is this something I would want for my own children?
- Do I want my children to be able to think critically, to communicate, to collaborate, to be creative and reason algebraically?

If the answer is yes, then I challenge you to prepare your lessons as if they were in your class. Lead your campus as if they were at your school and do for your campus children what you would want done for your own.

With something to think about, I'm Mike McFarland, challenging you to commit to providing for other people's children that which we desire for our own.

Dr. Michael D. McFarland
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