



The fine art of education

School Board Round Table

*October 14, 2008
Woodland JHS Library*

Today's Work Session:

What Are We Doing for the Kids in the Middle?

Linda Auman, Special Assistant for Curriculum & Instruction

Dick Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Student Life Services

- Linda distributed a report published in *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* that listed the top performing school districts in Arkansas. She noted that Fayetteville was ranked at the top or near the top in every category.
- The report also listed Fayetteville's grade inflation rate at 9%, which was the only single-digit rate in the state. Making an A in Fayetteville is truly an A.
- She noted that we do have some concerns with graduation rates and dropout rates in Fayetteville.
- Linda said that a systemic effort is underway to help those students who are dependent upon the schools for their education, since little if any help is available to them at home.
- Tony Wagner's book, *The Global Achievement Gap*, is serving as a guide for the district in revamping the way we educate students to help them acquire the skills necessary for the 21st century workplace.
- Dick Johnson pointed out that the achievement gap is a pre-K through 12th grade phenomenon.
- Linda added that the method of teaching and the configuration of schools hasn't changed much in several decades, but the needs of families have changed dramatically.
- "Prisoners of time" is how one educator has described the state of our nations schools.
- To be a world-class school district requires a world-class curriculum. Input from teachers will be critical to making this happen.
- The video presentation Two Million Minutes.
- Business leaders who will be hiring our graduates should be invited to the conversation.
- What are we doing to engage the students in the middle and make them want to come to school everyday?
- Dick provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Dumb Jock"



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- He defined a school-dependent student as one who depends on the school to provide the things that are usually provided by the family.
- Holt Middle School has started a program started “Teaming Up,” where strong students are paired with developmentally disabled students.
- The Dumb Jock study focused on almost 13,000 non-athletes and 4,300 athletes. The study of 11 high schools in Arkansas in grades 9-12 showed that athletes had higher grade point averages, fewer discipline problems, more AP courses, few dropouts, and a higher rate of college scholarships or other financial assistance than non-athletes.
- Dick noted that there are many students in our schools who are school dependent and we don’t know it yet.
- He added that he has seen a phenomenon he calls the snap, when a student who had been making dumb life decisions suddenly changes and begins acting like a more responsible person.
- When asked if the district had data on the number of students who aren’t engaged in any extracurricular activities, Dick said that those numbers are being pursued.
- FHS Choir director Dawnelle Fincher noted that she requires her students to bring her their 5-week grade reports and their 9-week report cards to keep tabs on who is struggling and who needs help.
- Julia Kennefick talked about the afterschool clubs that have formed at Leverett Elementary School, which have been very popular. She believes that many of the students have joined the clubs so that they could spend more time with their peers.
- Susan Heil said that she was confident that Fayetteville is the place to develop the 21st century learning community and to do it right.

Topics for future board round table sessions:

- Tracking the 9th and 10th graders who were in the first pre-K group. How have they performed?
- Cooperation between governmental and educational entities.

Comments from Patrons

- A patron asked how students are given life skills, such as balancing a checkbook,



FPS

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finding a job, using credit wisely, and living as an adult. Dr. Phyllis McGinty said that there are six classes at FHS that provide those skills.

- He also asked about sustainability programs that would give kids hands-on involvement. Dick spoke about the Green Teams and directed him to the district's green team website at greenteam.fayar.net.
- Susan wondered why schools are not dismissed early for the Homecoming Parade. Dick noted that the state requirements limit the ability to close early or have additional days off.

Next Round Table Meeting will be Tuesday, November 14

- Topic: Growth projections in the district

Did you know?

Every patron has 3 representatives on the Board

- Zone 1: Steve Percival
- Zone 2: Howard Hamilton
- Zone 3: Tim Kring
- Zone 4: Becky Purcell
- Zone 5: Tim Hudson
- At-Large: Susan Heil
- At-Large: Jim Halsell

Board members are citizen volunteers elected to a 5 year term.

Board Round Table Notes on www.fayar.net

<http://www.fayar.net/schoolboard/roundtable.html>