

From the Superintendent.....

As we start another school I would like to give an overview of what has been happening over the summer and talk about the year ahead.

The summer has been spent hiring 16 new teachers/teacher assistants and approximately the same number of support staff members. In addition, the major building focus has been to complete the capital project for technology renovations and upgrades. At this point, the Elementary and Middle Schools work will be completed in time for opening day and with a little luck, the High School will also be ready. When staff returns, all will have network accessibility and e-mail capability. For the Elementary and Middle School staff, this will be a new experience. Logging into the network will be the first training they will undergo September 3rd. As we progress through the year we will be working with staff to develop the integration of technology into daily teaching. A core group of teachers has begun their work this summer using the Intel Teach to the Future Program. Training with additional staff in this and other integration projects will continue throughout the school year. Each building will have at least one lab available for teacher and student use throughout the day. We hope that on your next visit to our schools you will visit these labs. Again, thanks to all of you for approving this project.

Although most of our summer curriculum work was eliminated during the budget process last spring, an important piece of work did take place. That was the Building Planning Team Sessions. Each of the three buildings in the district has a team made up of administration, parents and staff who write action plans for their buildings each year. These action plans now link directly to the student achievement area of our strategic plan. Our strategic plan focuses on five broad areas:

1. Student Achievement
2. Educating the Whole Child
3. Community Partnerships
4. Staff Effectiveness
5. Fiscal Responsibility

Under the student achievement area, there are three sub areas where all three building will be focusing their attention this year: literacy, math and academic intervention services. The first two are the 3R's that many of you recall from your school days – reading, writing and arithmetic. The last, academic intervention services, deals with support services for students at risk of not meeting standards in all areas. Each of the three building in the district will focus on these areas through the plans they wrote this summer.

This linkage between the Building Team Plans and the Strategic Plan will focus energy on the goals, which you as a community articulated through the focus groups and surveys of last year. In upcoming issues of “What’s Happening” we will focus on a different one of these areas to explain more fully the specific work that will be taking place.

As with all issues we face, our goal continues to be best stated in our Mission Statement:

“To provide an effective, high quality learning experience every day, for every student, with the goal of preparing students to be successful at each level and to be contributing members of society”.

In order to meet our mission we look for an open system of communication between the community and the school system. Being part of a small system like Williamson, accessibility to a Superintendent or a Board Member is often immediate. For those of you coming from larger districts, you might be surprised by our accessibility. It is something that I believe is appreciated when there is a pressing concern. But some times, this accessibility leaves out some preliminary steps.

If you have a concern about something happening at school with your child, your first contact should be with the teacher or staff member directly. If you are dissatisfied with their response, go to the staff’s supervisor (usually the Building Principal). Next, if you are still dissatisfied, please call my office. And finally, if you are dissatisfied with my response, call a Board of Education member.

If you have general concerns about goals, policies, budgets, or our strategic plan contact either myself or a Board of Education Member directly. These are areas where we have primary responsibility. I know that the Board and myself want to be accessible and hear your thoughts and concerns directly on these issues.