

December 1, 2010

To: Smitty

From: Monty Aldrich

THOUGHTS FROM THE UNIT OFFICE...

There are many excuses for bashing public education. This continues to be on the increase in our nation. Many headlines read, "Local school district is failing according to test scores". Other headlines talk about the waste in taxpayers' dollars, the lack of quality teaching and learning, etc. While under scrutiny most of the time, I want to defend public education in many ways at North Clay.

Right now, times are financially difficult for numerous people and the tension that is added to families is unparalleled. The amount of torn homes and children struggling to eat and help raise siblings is unwritten. The time for rebellion among all political topics is at an all-time high. The loss of faith and family is skyrocketing. The time for holding adults responsible is probably at an all-time low. Individualism among Americans is at an all-time high. That ranges from every occupation to every action that people take to be in the limelight. Exposure to anything and everything is within a finger's touch by internet, phone, billfold, or television. Why does anyone need to practice patience? Why teach manners and etiquette? With all of this, we wonder what is wrong with our younger generation? Why can't we relate to them?

Quick fixes are of great value to people now. Nobody wants to wait for anything, including anything from cooking in the microwave to achieving financial success. Why value the process of developing a career and working towards goals when there are "easier" ways to make a lot of money whether it's on the level or not? The same is true with children. Give them movies, games, technology, money, but give it to them so that their time will be occupied. As long as they are not bothersome, all is good. That seems to be the reflection of many young people that I talk with who are troubled either at home or school. Nobody seems to care about them as long as they are given things and stay out of the way of parents. It is hard to teach and motivate a child who comes to school with baggage as such. Gift giving is great but very overrated!

It is amazingly difficult to take such a diverse group of young people and group them together while asking that public education do the following:

- Teach my child and make sure that he stays up with the rest of the children regardless of his ability.
- Make sure he is always on-task, learning, healthy, nourished, and kept safe.
- Make sure he is not bullied, left out, made fun of, or shorted of anything that others bring to school.
- Make sure he is transported where he needs to go so that nobody worries about him.
- Make sure he stays ahead of his friends so that they don't receive more recognition.
- Don't allow him to fail because his self-esteem will be crushed.
- And, since he hates school, find ways to make him happy so that he will want to be there and do well.

Test scores derived from an assessment that is developed by experts and given for one week or less does not make the child. These are tests that do not affect the child's final grades or grade level outcome. Then why does our government determine the success rate of public schools by this method? Government collects data all the time and determines that other countries are beating us in math and science scores all across the world. I would like to know how many of these experts would be interested in moving to any of those countries outranking us. After all, those countries don't educate all children. They "weed" those who fall behind early and cannot cut the mustard.

Access to private schools in our area is very scarce and our duty is to not only educate ALL children, but to provide them with care, love, safety, nutrition, exercise, courage, confidence, a positive attitude, life skills, manners, good behavior, and many other qualities. Teaching them to be "good people" is of much

importance to me. A good person will be motivated, positive, caring, hard-working, and a great addition to society.

I know that we enroll, educate, and care for the most important thing in your life...your child. I know that it can be greatly emotional when worrying about your child's destination. Many of us who work here have children or grandchildren in the system as well. We're not perfect but we are always striving for perfection and we will take great care of all as we can.

The School Reach system will be our primary source for any weather-related cancellations, early dismissals, major announcements, and a few other necessary incidences. Regarding weather-related cancellations, it is necessary for us to call off school for ice or snow by 6:00 a.m. This could result in you being called by the system at that time of the morning. Occasionally, we call off school the previous evening, but that decision may not be made before 10:00 p.m. So, you could potentially be called at the listed times above. Please understand that you can have "School Reach" contact numbers listed for this purpose, and keep other emergency contact numbers at each school office for individual emergency communication. **PLEASE DO NOT CALL BACK THE PHONE NUMBER ON YOUR CALLER ID WHEN SCHOOL REACH CALLS YOU. THIS CLOUDS THE SYSTEM AND MAKES OTHER CALLS IMPOSSIBLE.**

The other main source that I will contact in the event of any happenings mentioned in the previous paragraph is WNOI-FM Radio 103.9 (Flora). I am no longer contacting all other radio and television stations unless for some odd reason our School Reach system is down. WNOI also posts announcements on their website at www.wnoi.com.

Want to help the school make some money and have it not cost you anything? We have a new program here at North Clay that is very easy to do and won't cost you anything more than those things you would normally purchase. Many of us use online shopping for our purchases. You can now go to our school website at www.northclayschools.com, click on the fundraising link to 1StepFundraiser.com, and shop at over 250 online stores carrying the things you ordinarily purchase.

When you purchase things on this link, North Clay will get a percentage of the purchase money back. Whether you are buying school supplies, downloading songs, purchasing a gift, booking a hotel or flight, or shopping for Christmas, you can be helping to better the education of our students. The prices aren't higher due to this. It's just an agreement we have made with these merchants. PLEASE be sure to tell your friends and family about this. Every little bit helps!

Please remember that when you have a question, concern, complaint, etc. concerning your child, please start with a solution by contacting the most immediate staff member involved. Our chain of command is posted on our website at www.northclayschools.com. Please review this and follow it for best results in solving issues.