

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK.....

04-25-08

Dear Glen Grove Families,

As we are wrapping up this school year, we are also looking forward to next year. This is the time of year when buildings are busy recruiting and hiring those people who will join our learning community adding to the quality group of professionals we put before your children each day. It is important that as parents you understand the intensity and commitment with which we approach the teacher selection process.

Do teachers really matter? Research suggests that curriculum, class size, district funding, family and community involvement, along with many other school related factors all contribute to school improvement and student achievement. However, the single most influential school-based factor is the *teacher*.

What is an effective teacher? I am sure every stakeholder, parent, student, principal, and/or teacher, would have a somewhat different definition. I have heard terms such as, *competent, reflective, friendly, respected, professional, demanding, fun* and *knowledgeable* used to describe the best teachers. Research also offers a variety of descriptors in trying to define the effective teacher. Given research and experience, we do know that effective teachers possess certain characteristics.

Over the past five years in administration, I have interviewed hundreds of teacher candidates. As I have shared insights with other administrators and teachers as to what we look for in an "effective teacher", it is clear that it begins with the individual's purpose for teaching, ability to build relationships, knowledge of teaching and learning and the ability to bring learning to life. In an attempt to find excellence, District 34 and Glen Grove utilize an intensive selection process that allows us to identify those qualities of an effective teacher.

The interview process begins with an on-line screening tool that helps to sort the qualities of the candidates. We examine the candidates' transcripts and resumes looking for strong academic achievement and related experiences. We highlight activities where the candidate has worked with students in settings other than schools. Experiences as a camp counselor or coach of youth sports and tutoring programs begin to lay the foundation for developing the qualities of an effective teacher. The next step involves a screening interview that gives us the opportunity to measure the candidates' responses against a standard of excellence, followed by a building level interview. During the interviews, questions are asked that give us insight to the individual as a person. Specifically, we look for teachers that are committed to helping children to learn and grow. These candidates will also have a positive "can-do" attitude about life and have high expectations for themselves and their students. In the course of the discussion, we look for opportunities that demonstrate the ability to create a supportive, orderly and productive learning environment. We listen and examine carefully the candidate's ability to communicate both verbally and in writing. We are also looking for those people who value human relationships.

Once the individual is offered a position, our work as administrators is just beginning. We continuously supervise and support the development of effective teachers. While the extensive pre-employment procedures move us closer to identifying those individuals who will best meet the needs of our students, we continue to monitor and evaluate these new teachers. If we do our job of selecting and further developing effective teachers, then Glen Grove continues to be more than just a wonderful building, it remains a school of excellence.

Respectfully,



Merryl B. Brownlow

Final Word – Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.

-Marian Wright Edelman