

## Superintendent's Corner

"What needs to happen?"

During the summer months, our administrative team takes turns writing this weekly column and thus I have but a few more articles to author before I leave the district for my new assignment in the Box Elder County School District. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you what I consider to be the largest challenges facing our school district.

### *Academic Expectations and Performance*

Our children and grandchildren are entering a global economy where they will be competing with individuals throughout the world for various opportunities including future jobs. We must increase the academic expectations and performance of the children in this community if they are going to withstand a global challenge. Our children must develop a strong work ethic, learn how to work with others, and get really good at something that has value.

Morgan School District will need to continue to develop and implement interventions that help students who are struggling. We must also find ways to help students with significant skills and talents maintain their interest in learning.

To compete, many students will need to increase their efforts in school. Learning can't be confined to the regular classroom for 178 days a year. The development of reading skills and mathematical understanding must extend beyond the normal school day and into the summer months. Although reading and math are the most academic skills a student needs to master, there is more to learning than these two subjects. Individual families as well as our instructional staff must look for every opportunity to expand the learning horizons of each child.

We are a very good school district until we consider our demographics. When you take into account the nature of our students, we aren't as good as it appears. We can do much better, and will need to do so in the future. "We" is not limited to just the district employees. It refers to our community as a whole.

### *A Key Factor is the Classroom Teacher*

We have a very good staff in the Morgan School District. It has taken a great deal of hard work to put together the staff that we have. The employment of the very best teachers regardless of their name, home state, religion, or ethnicity is critical to the continued success of our school district. If we become lazy in the employment process, our students will suffer.

It is also important that the administration and Board of Education rid the district of employees who are unable and/or unwilling to improve. People must be given a reasonable opportunity to fulfill their potential, but the district's loyalty should be first to the students.

In order to attract and retain a competent staff, the district must provide a competitive salary and benefit package while maintaining a positive work climate. One of the critical aspects of a positive work climate is a teacher's relationship with parents. There will be frequent disagreements. Mistakes will be made. Most problems can be worked out when both sides are willing to listen. Two things that have the most negative effect on teachers are students who are out-of-control and parents who try to intimidate and/or bully teachers.

### *Recognition of Problems*

Currently, there is a strong effort to recognize community problems and work together to make things better. Morgan Empowered is a great example of various aspects of this community coming together in an attempt to deal with certain issues. The Morgan Education Foundation and the scholarship committee are additional examples. It is important to continue the process of dealing with issues instead of ignoring the problems in hopes they will simply go away.

Schools are simply a reflection of the community in which they exist. The problems that exist within our teenage society reflect the problems that exist in the community as a whole. The school district hasn't created the problems that our youth are facing, and the school district can't solve those problems. The school district can, however, partner with other elements of the community in helping to develop solutions that will help.

### Facilities

The population of our county will soon explode. There is a great need to secure another school site in anticipation of a third elementary school in the near future. The bus garage/shop is inadequate, unsafe and must be replaced in the near future. The next building project will probably include an addition to Morgan Middle School in order to meet enrollment increases. The high school is in need of frequent remodeling and updating. These projects will place additional burdens on the taxpayers of Morgan County, but they will be essential to the education of our youth.

### Support and Tradition

Our greatest strength is the tremendous tradition for success that is found in Morgan County and the level of support that we see for the students and the school district. Support and tradition has created the foundation that helps make us what we are. If the level of support the district currently enjoys continues, the future will be bright for the students of our school district.