



A Message from Superintendent Hoernemann

(Following is a guest column from the September 2013 issue of the Hendricks County ICON.)

Expectations: School and parents

Working together for a common goal

Public education is a pact — an agreement — at the local, state, and federal level to prepare our children for a world far different from the one in which we currently live. I can't think of a more exciting or rewarding profession; it is an honor to serve our communities in this way.

We begin this new school year with a renewed sense of energy and optimism. By the way, this is the same way I feel on Monday mornings! Refreshed from the weekend, organized, and ready to tackle the work week. In our schools, we always begin the year by talking about expectations. So let's make a deal. Let's agree on what you can expect from us and how we can count on you!

1. Generosity of spirit. Let's give each other the benefit of the doubt! Parents, sometimes you get frustrated with the teachers, the principals, even the superintendent. Please try to give us the benefit of the doubt and recognize that when we woke up this morning it was with every intention of doing what's best for your children. Yes, we will fall short sometimes and we trust you will let us know. We hope you will do so early on, before you are completely frustrated. And for our part, what can you expect from us? We will listen. Rather than get defensive, we will do our best to listen carefully to the constructive feedback. Let's consistently remind each other that we are all working toward the same end.

2. Respectful communication. Our students, your children, are watching what we do and say. Let's commit to modeling respectful communication. When we are really upset, chances are we should step away from the keyboard and talk on the phone or in person. How about we all agree not to air our most frustrating moments via social media and take a moment to talk to each other? Okay, tall order I admit! Especially when we are very emotional or frustrated, but I have yet to see a thorny issue truly resolved or even improved on Facebook.

3. Let's work together. This summer I was reminded by a legislator that nothing gets his attention like hearing from concerned citizens. In a world of shrinking resources, we need to advocate for public education. You can rely on your schools to do a better job of keeping you informed about the latest challenges. We hope we can depend upon you to advocate for your children. Get involved. Keep up with the school board's work, stay informed about new laws affecting public schools, and most importantly, communicate with your elected representatives.

Yes, all of this is challenging, but it's Monday, so I know that together we can accomplish this!

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