

Breaking education's performance barriers

By Kyrene Schools Superintendent Dr. David Schauer



Dr. David Schauer

David Stone / Wrangler News

The summer presents great opportunities for me to catch up on professional reading, and one of the books I most enjoyed is called *Breakthrough* by Fullan, Hill and Crevola.

The authors suggest that we are on the verge of “a revolutionary new approach to educational reform. This reform would break away from the conventional paradigm to help educators create focused instruction, transform the classroom experience, and dramatically raise—and sustain—performance levels for students and teachers alike.”

Now you might be asking yourselves, “What kind of new jargon is

Dr. Schauer throwing out!”

Basically, it's like this: Teachers can now have more “precision” in their teaching through the use of daily assessments that tell them what an individual student needs next in their learning.

In addition, ongoing professional learning (different than the traditional approach), where teachers work with colleagues, content experts and administrators analyzing student progress and planning instruction, ensures that the students get the kind of learning support they need.

The book referred to above compares health care to education. In health care, the concept of the Critical Care Path has revolutionized the industry.

Such a path involves mapping the typical path for a given care process and anticipates at every stage the likely variations from the typical path that could possibly occur.

Specific research-based actions are proactively developed and can be immediately taken when a variation occurs. Education can learn from this

type of approach and we already have many of the pieces in place.

How can you help?

While those of us in the profession continue to work toward the “breakthrough” needed to address the diverse learning needs of our students, members of the community can help influence the legislators and policy makers to provide the consistent funding and resources we need to do this work.

With the mega-election looming in November, it will be more important than ever to be well educated about all the propositions, initiatives and the beliefs of the candidates running for office.

Take the time to educate yourselves about the redistricting (unification) initiative that will be on the ballot in November asking voters to determine if Kyrene, Tempe Elementary and Tempe Union should combine into one school district.

Lots of research has been done and you'll find the Kyrene Governing Board research and position at www.kyrene.org. While it is not my place to advocate for a position on this

topic, I do believe that it is absolutely paramount that people understand what it means to check the Yes or No box on this initiative!

In addition, three seats of the Kyrene Governing Board will be decided, and it's important to familiarize yourselves with the individuals who are running and what they stand for.

Information on candidate forums will be coming out this fall. Anyone who runs or serves on the Governing Board is an unpaid volunteer.

These are dedicated community leaders committed to providing the very best education possible for all students who go to school in Kyrene.

We should all be extremely thankful and grateful to them for the time and energy they put into this and make sure we know who we are voting for.

This is Kyrene's 120th year of educating students in Arizona.

We have a proud and rich history and plan on continuing to be the poster child for excellence in public education. Kyrene's vision and mission is about making sure all students are successful, and we mean what we say!