

4-1-2013

HELLO AND WELCOME TO MY REGULAR VIDEO MESSAGE. I'M JANET BARRESI, OKLAHOMA STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

FIRST OF ALL, I HOPE EVERYONE HAD A WONDERFUL EASTER HOLIDAY AND HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO RELAX WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

NOW, MANY OF YOU KNOW THAT I ADVOCATE FOR QUALITY TEACHERS IN THE CLASSROOM AND QUALITY LEADERS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS AS A MEANS OF ACHIEVING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE FOR OUR CHILDREN. TODAY, I'M GOING TO ADD ANOTHER VERY IMPORTANT COMPONENT TO THE MIX: COMMUNITY SUPPORT.

RECENTLY, I HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE TO VISIT TWO HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOL DISTRICTS ON MY RAISE THE GRADE TOUR. IN ADDITION TO THE OUTSTANDING TEACHERS AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERS, THEY HAVE ANOTHER CHARACTERISTIC IN COMMON WHICH IS AN IMPRESSIVE LEVEL OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT.

I SAW FIRSTHAND IN THE DISTRICTS OF CHOCTAW-NICOMA PARK AND BETHANY SCHOOLS THE DIFFERENCE IT MAKES. THE DISTRICTS NOT ONLY SET HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ITS STUDENTS, THE COMMUNITY SETS HIGH EXPECTATION FOR ITS SCHOOLS, AND BOTH OF THESE COMMUNITIES DEFINITELY HAVE SOMETHING OF WHICH TO BE PROUD. THE REPORT CARDS ARE PROOF THAT ALL EFFORTS PAY OFF AS BOTH ARE HIGH PERFORMING DISTRICTS.

WHEN VISITING THESE DISTRICTS, THE BENEFITS OF COMBINING EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING WITH ACTIVE COMMUNITY SUPPORT ARE EVIDENT. BOTH DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS CAN'T AGREE MORE THAT THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT IS INVALUABLE AND THEY ARE VERY THANKFUL FOR IT.

DR. JIM MCCHAREN OF CHOCTAW-NICOMA PARK KNOWS THE SUPPORT THEY RECEIVE THROUGH THE FOUNDATION'S FUNDRAISING EFFORTS AND THE PASSAGE OF BOND ISSUES, WHICH ARE TWO OF THE BIGGEST CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY. HE SAYS, "OUR CITY LEADERS FROM THE MAYOR TO THE CIVIC CLUB MEMBERS GET VERY INVOLVED IN OUR BOND ELECTIONS AND THAT IS KEY."

IN THE PAST EIGHT OR NINE YEARS, CHOCTAW-NICOMA PARK HAS PASSED \$123 MILLION IN BONDS WITH AN 85 PERCENT OR HIGHER APPROVAL RATING. CONGRATULATIONS.

WHEN IT COMES TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SELLING THE CITY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SCHOOLS ENCOURAGES COMMUNITY SUPPORT. THEY WANT NEW BUSINESSES AND RESIDENTS TO SEE THAT YOU GET THE WHOLE PACKAGE OF GREAT SCHOOLS AND A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE.

SOMETIMES IT'S A MATTER OF LOOKING AT WHAT SURROUNDS YOU AND EMBRACING IT. THAT IS WHAT BETHANY SCHOOLS HAS DONE WITH SOUTHERN NAZARENE UNIVERSITY. DR. KENT SHELLENBERGER CAN'T COME CLOSE TO PUTTING A VALUE ON THE SUPPORT THEY RECEIVE FROM THE UNIVERSITY.

THE COLLEGE STUDENTS ARE VERY INTERESTED IN THE HIGH ACADEMIC STANDARDS BETHANY SETS. THEY HELP REINFORCE THE IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS THROUGH TUTORING AND STUDENT TEACHING. DR. SHELLENBERGER BOASTS THAT, "WE'RE VERY FORTUNATE TO HAVE THEM RIGHT ACROSS THE STREET."

AT THE END OF THE DAY, BOTH SUPERINTENDENTS BRAG MOST ABOUT PARENTAL AND ALUMNI SUPPORT. THEY HAVE PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS WHO ARE ACTIVE IN PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS, HELP WITH HOMEWORK AND VOLUNTEER AT SCHOOL. THE DISTRICTS ALSO ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF ALUMNI WHO COME BACK TO TEACH. THESE INDIVIDUALS MAKE AN INCREDIBLE IMPRESSION ON THE CHILDREN. THEY ALSO ENCOURAGE TEACHERS AND DISTRICT LEADERS TO STAY THE COURSE IN GROWING COLLEGE, CAREER AND CITIZEN READY STUDENTS FOR 21ST CENTURY LIFE.

I KNOW THERE ARE MANY DISTRICTS THAT ENJOY GREAT COMMUNITY SUPPORT, BUT TODAY I CHALLENGE ALL PARENTS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS ACROSS THE STATE TO MEET WITH THEIR LOCAL SCHOOL LEADERS AND DEVISE A PLAN FOR GETTING INVOLVED AND HELPING US ALL RAISE THE GRADE TOGETHER IN OKLAHOMA FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR FUTURE LEADERS - OUR CHILDREN. THANKS FOR WATCHING, AND WE'LL VISIT AGAIN SOON.

