

***If a doctor, lawyer, or dentist had 40 people in his office at one time, all of whom had different needs, and some of whom didn't want to be there and were causing trouble, and the doctor, lawyer, or dentist, without assistance, had to treat them all with professional excellence for nine months, then he might have some conception of the classroom teacher's job. ~Donald D. Quinn***

I am completely saddened by the current state of affairs in education. There is a general lack of respect for the teaching profession and for the other adults in school buildings who devote their time, energy, and expertise for the benefit of our nation's most precious resource: our children. The current political landscape as it pertains to education is one of negativity, blame, and involves a lack of common sense. Teaching is not viewed as a profession, but often as a job where its workers (teachers) receive extended vacations and expensive benefits packages. State legislators pay little attention to the countless hours of free tutoring that teachers provide, the after-school programs for which they serve as advisers, and the participation in the building of a school culture through memberships on school committees.

This lack of respect for the teaching profession, and education in general, manifests itself in reduced funding for classroom instruction, an attack on teacher wages and benefits packages, and increased responsibilities for educators to prepare students for college and the world of work. What makes this more problematic is that with increased responsibilities for educators, there is little support. The average American values education; conversely, teachers are viewed as overpaid, spoiled, and ineffective. Recent films like *Waiting for Superman* highlight the atrocious malpractices in education. However, very little attention is given to the phenomenal things that educators do. No other profession in our society allows one to be a part of inspiring an entire generation. What other career is there that has its benefactors return years later, leading successful lives because of the way that a teacher has given to them?

Aside from the many positive experiences that I have had with students, some of the most rewarding experiences in my career are when I have the opportunities to honor a teacher. Just recently, a teacher at Harrison received the distinction of High School Teacher of the Year for Farmington Public Schools. This was bestowed upon him for the relationships that he developed, and continues to develop with students, the inspiration that he provides for them, and the passion that he exhibits for student learning. Teachers are the backbone of public education. It is teachers who we trust to develop courage and risk-taking in our children. Let us support them as they continue to support students. Let us show our appreciation for them by giving them something as simple as a "Thank You."

***~ Aaron Johnson  
Principal, Harrison High School***