

Last month I pledged to you to identify in this column what I've found to be items valued by our community. With that in mind, I should mention that I am a strong proponent of extra-curricular activities as they extend the school experience past the last bell and often into the evening. This extension of the education process is possibly the greatest "safety net" that exists for at-risk students.

Recently, during my back to school welcome to all GPS staff, I mentioned the importance of implementing the 4 C's which are:

1. Critical thinking and problem solving
2. Communication
3. Collaboration
4. Creativity and innovation

These components are designed to support the traditional "3 R's" that we all grew up with (reading, writing and arithmetic). I feel the implementation of the 4 C's can extend past classroom instruction and into the philosophy of the school district.

From the 4 C's we have developed three broad goals of the district in the coming year. Those goals are:

1. Develop a long-range plan for funding facility, infrastructure and instructional needs.
2. Reconnect the district with the community past Friday nights.
3. Communicate to the community the importance of what we do and their responsibility to help Guthrie Public Schools improve.

One of the great treasures residing in this community is the bond when we come together for competition. The sustained success of our Football program along with the pride generated as we watch our students grow and succeed is something that I want to extend to other parts of what our district accomplishes. The student you see on the field or in the band or cheering on the sidelines is the same one that opens the door for you at the drugstore and mows your lawn. Fall extra-curricular activities such as Football, Softball, Cross Country and Band Contests are all activities where you can watch our students succeed and your continued support helps them grow into young adults.

I want to publicly thank the community and especially the Guthrie Police Department for their work and patience on the first few days of school. With the changes we made in transportation many of you experienced delays due to shifts in traffic patterns. We continue to evaluate our bus routes to tweak what is necessary. One item contributing to the traffic challenges was simple to identify—enrollment is up by over 100 students district wide from our student count in 2011-12. This growth is significant and another indicator of change in our community. With such a large district geographically, we will be looking carefully where our students live in order to effectively plan for the future of the district.

There's not a better place to be on Friday nights in Oklahoma than "The Rock" when the Blujays are playing but don't forget our many other activities that you can find at www.guthrie.k12.ok.us I hope to see you there!