

Update – Community Discussions Regarding Curriculum

Parents, Patrons & Staff,

I need to take a moment to address a matter that appears to be circulating throughout our community. However, before I do so, I would like to reflect for a moment (come on now, you really didn't expect this to be short and sweet.) I am so proud of our community and our school district. During what has been the most tumultuous times in the nearly 47 years of my lifetime, the Blackfoot community and school district have fared far better than most. I am so grateful for the parents and patrons who comment to me that they have been so pleased with how our community and school district have handled things during this forsaken pandemic. I have heard over and over from people that they appreciate the "common sense" approach we have taken. Now, we have not been perfect. We stumbled here and there, and I know without a doubt that there are those who feel we did too much, and those who feel we did not do enough. This year has truly been the most divisive regarding how things should be done, yet we have done well!

With that being said, I am proud of how supportive (yes, with a bit of grumbling from time to time) the community has been. Through it all, there have been a few things I have learned during this pandemic: (1) I trust the community of Blackfoot, (2) Blackfoot is a diverse community, and (3) Blackfoot is passionate about supporting its students (kids). Each of these attributes is a great strength, however, each in excess can become a liability. That is the issue that keeps me on my toes. I hope by now you realize I have the greatest desire to support our children while they attend our schools. The balancing act that is required sometimes gets the best of me, but please know my intentions are never to hinder or hamper any child's growth.

Every now and then, issues arise which have the potential to provoke strong emotions due to the attributes mentioned above. Such issues include our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and, more recently, the discussion regarding a potential selection for an English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum for our secondary students. Just as with the pandemic, we have not been perfect through the curriculum process. We have done our best to correct those imperfections. We have no intention of selecting materials that will grant students access to pornographic content. Regarding other concerns that might arise from a curriculum selection, I revert to the first attribute mentioned: I trust the community of Blackfoot. I have no doubt that we can work through difficult issues. I trust our educators, I trust our parents, I trust our patrons, and I trust our school board. If we do our best to listen to the point of view of others and approach the issue with a desire to work together, I believe we will arrive at a phenomenal solution, not a perfect solution, but one that "fits" Blackfoot.

Sincerely,

Brian Kress
Superintendent of Schools
Blackfoot School District