Continuing to Step Forward Even If We Fall Backward

Timothy B. Jones
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It is hard to believe a year has gone by since the re-launch of School Leadership Review featuring our tribute issue. The response of the new look and feel has been incredible and your kind words and continued support is greatly appreciated by everyone associated with the editorial staff. The journal represents a significant financial investment on behalf of the Texas Counsel of Professors of Educational Administration (TCPEA) in addition to extraordinary in-kind assistance from the Institutions that house and support all of the editors and issue reviewers.

This issue is also supported by Abilene Christian University. Numerous universities, in addition to the in-kind partners mentioned above, sponsor specific issues in the way of advertising. These advertisements provide critical capital to support the journal without increasing subscription costs to our members or the subsidies from TCPEA which are necessary to produce it.

Volume 8, Issue 1 of the journal offers for your consideration:

Our invited author, Mary Ann Whiteker, a Texas superintendent of schools, provides a vision for school leaders to proactively suggest alternatives to our legislators and the Texas Education Agency for accountability and reform of our schools. She has worked with several superintendents across the state because they feel they have the expertise of schools and education and therefore, must take the lead for the future of our public schools.

With another very timely piece given the litigation currently in the Texas courts, Gary Bigham contributes to our understanding of the foundation of schools in Texas by reviewing the legal structures of public schools. In his article, he outlines and discusses pertinent laws and court actions that have impacted schools and their role in society.

The authors, Nancy Votteler, Mary Robbins, and Debra Price, advance the discussion on improving schools through an examination of urban students’ perceptions and reflections on school safety and climate as well as students’ expectations from teachers and administrators on how to have success. This piece is particularly timely given recent events discussed later.

The last article for your consideration is the work of the winner of the 2012-13 Graduate Research Exchange (GRE) held this past September in Austin. The Editorial Board proudly publishes Dana Mitchell Barnes, doctoral student at Texas A&M University-Commerce, winning entry at the GRE. Her entry, Dennis Littky, the Educational Activist: Can His Model Revamp the Public Educational System?, was one of more than 30 entries submitted for presentation. In this paper written under the supervision of Dr. Casey Graham Brown, Ms. Barnes discusses educational administrators through the eyes and work of Dennis Littky.
Finally, as we write this introduction and go to press on this issue, American schools are only a few days from the horrible events at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown Connecticut. There is perhaps no greater fear of any school administrator than the threat of danger in their school. Although hard to imagine at this point, we can only pray that this unthinkable day will someday yield something positive and good for the students of other schools. As a profession, we mourn the loss of 20 beautiful children and 6 dedicated professionals including an incredibly courageous building principal who did everything she could to prevent what happened on her campus. Hopefully, moving forward, we can help lead the conversation with politicians, school board members, community citizens and other stakeholders of meaningful improvements for school safety.

So, let us all do anything in our capacity toward making December 14, 2012 the last time a child in a school was harmed in any way. Let that day be a constant reminder of the dangers that lurk, that the safety of the school is the responsibility of everyone, and that together we can make school a safer place.

Best wishes for a prosperous 2013!

Timothy B. Jones, Ed.D.
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