

Kudos to school district students' achievements

By Scott Levine Herald Associate Editor | Posted: Friday, October 23, 2015 6:00 am

The Clinton School District has once again proven that perception can change.

Remember spring? I'm sure many district officials and employees remember that time. The district agonized through budget cuts that circulated in the local news for weeks. The decisions were difficult and through time, the district waded its way through the mess.

Now, a few months later, that pain has subsided with recent triumphs from employees, representatives and students.

The good news started late last month with Whittier Elementary School's recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School. Iowa featured only five schools with that distinction, so you can imagine how big of an honor that is for any district.

We've all heard the negative comments from residents about the district. It's hard to ignore.

But this honor is just another reason why those naysayers are actually incorrect. Maybe at one time the district didn't feature this much academic rigor. I'm not sure since I haven't been here for decades.

But the facilities and personnel have proven time and time again that Clinton does have top-tier academics. It's about time that the public begins to recognize this, and during the last few years, it appears that public perception is beginning to change.

That momentum continued with the recent news that enrollment had actually increased in the district, staving off a declining trend that has hindered the district in the past. Maybe the public is putting more trust in the district or possibly there are more residents to send their children to school. We're not sure of the reason, but more enrollment means more money from the state of Iowa.

That should help when budget discussions commence in 2016; and speaking of those budget issues, it also appears that situation should be much smoother than last year.

Not to be outdone, though, the recent actions of the student body and staff during homecoming cannot be ignored. Students didn't have to elect Corvin Ruggles and Darrian Balk as king and queen. But they did.

They also didn't have to do as much as they did for junior Chris Foster, who is undergoing cancer treatment. But they did.

I don't know Foster personally, but as a person who has seen cancer's effects firsthand and how difficult the treatments can be, I would question if the student body even realized how much their support has meant to Foster.

Going through cancer is difficult and seeing a young person go through would be something hard to imagine. But any support goes a long way and what the students and staff did for Foster was much more than likely anyone could have imagined (also Davenport West should be commended, too, with the support shown from its students).

These aren't public relations ploys to attempt to get better marketing out to the community. I've seen plenty of those.

That's what makes these good news items even better. It's taken a lot to get to this point for the district and it hasn't gone unnoticed. It will be a tough 30 days to repeat, but we'll keep an eye on how the district keeps the momentum going.

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