

MUMFORD PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND FRIENDS

After 48 years in education and 41 of those years as Superintendent of Mumford ISD, I have decided to retire as Superintendent effective June 30, 2018. When I first came to Mumford it was a K-8 school district with 90 students. We had one building, built in the early 1900's and three portable buildings. There was no money and the main school building needed a lot of repairs, from major roof leaks to wooden floors that were rotting. Although I was young and a first year superintendent, I was excited when I saw the potential the school had. With good students, parents and a very supportive board who had genuine care for the children and their education, I knew quickly this was where I wanted to be. In time we were able to build a new school building and the student population started to increase. With excellent teachers we continued to increase in student population and three more school buildings were built. As enrollment increased we added a high school and expanded through the 12th grade. Today, Mumford has around 625 students, 4 school buildings, 2 gyms and a sports complex. All the buildings and facilities were paid for by the school, without a bond and the school is debt free.

Mumford School is recognized as one of the best schools in the state and nation. Mumford Elementary School was recently nominated as a Blue Ribbon School for the second time. Mumford is well known for its academics, structure, and discipline. Mumford School is made up of over 90 percent transfer students with a waiting list for several grades. Parents choose to bring their children to our school. This is all possible because of the great staff, positive environment, and supportive community and board. School administrators have a tendency to move from job to job, feeling like bigger schools equate to better schools and opportunities. Something I learned early on is the grass is not always greener, and being in a small school allows you to know the families much more closely. I have enjoyed my years here, and have had the privilege and opportunity to build relationships with the students and parents. Being able to witness multiple generations share Mumford School as former students have become parents and grandparents is very special.

A lot of things are different today compared to 41 years ago but some things have stayed the same, caring for children and their education. All children need to learn the basics: reading, writing and arithmetic. As long as we start a strong foundation and build from there, we will be successful and produce a productive child. The biggest difference today is technology and the rush of today's lifestyle. Parents and students all seem to have a lot more activities after school, life is more complex and we all seem to be in such a hurry. During in-service each year, I remind the staff how fast time flies by, that we need to slow down and take time to enjoy each day.

I have been asked many times about what I will do when I retire, well in all honesty, I have no idea. I will have to take my own advice and learn how to slow down, enjoy time, work less, and travel more. My time with Mumford School is not completely over, as the board has asked me to help in the transition by being available on a part time basis. I will have more time to enjoy my family and be able to attend more events with my grandchildren. I have been blessed with a great wife for fifty years, four boys and four daughters in laws, six granddaughters and one grandson. There are a great part of my life and I am so lucky because we are all very close and enjoy spending time together. I feel fortunate to have had basically two families in my life, my wife and children and my school family.

I have appreciated the mutual support and respect that I have shared with colleagues and administrators from other schools throughout the state. I want to thank the students and parents for their great cooperation and support. Also, nothing would be possible without the great staff. I have so many staff members that have been with me for many years. Lastly, I want to thank the School Board, with their help we have been able to accomplish great things at Mumford and I will miss their friendship. The hardest part of leaving is the great people I have been working with. I have said many times; find a job you like and you will never work a day in your life; I can honestly say I feel that is so true of my time here. I want to thank you all for allowing me to be part of your lives at Mumford School for the last 41 years.

Pete J. Bienski, Jr.