

# Chalkboard

By

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This *Chalkboard* concludes the series that has attempted to answer three simple questions related to the school district focusing attention on student learning. Those simple questions, borrowed from Richard DuFour's book Getting Started: Reculturing Schools to Become Professional Learning Communities, were "What is it we want the students to learn?" "How will we know when they have learned it?" and "What do we do when they don't learn it?" As I have for the last two weeks, I direct your attention to two Arkansas Department of Education web sites where the answers to the first two questions may be found. Those addresses are <http://arkedu.state.ar.us/curriculum/frameworks.html> and <http://arkedu.state.ar.us/actaap/definitions/#ACTAAP>.

Last week the opinion was expressed that the school and the parent have a joint responsibility to get involved when a child begins to experience academic difficulties or other problems at school. Some examples of school and parental intervention strategies were suggested. A discerning reader would have noticed the importance of clear communication between the school and parent as soon as either perceived the student to be experiencing learning or behavioral problems.

In the Gentry School System, students who are experiencing learning difficulties in some area that cannot be resolved by the intervention of the regular classroom teacher may be assigned to the Title 1 program for supplemental instruction, or if the need is greater, may become a participant in the district's special education program. In addition, Gentry Public Schools has a Migrant program, A Parent Volunteer program, an after-school tutoring program, and an ESL (English as a Second Language) program. All of these are programs designed to provide supplemental services to students who have special needs.

Is it feasible to believe that prompt intervention is the key to increased student achievement? Think of your favorite saying in this area of thought. Two that readily come to mind are "A stitch in time saves nine" and "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!" If you need a more graphic analogy, ask yourself, "How soon do I want my physician to correctly diagnose that I have cancer and begin treatment?"

That answer should be the same as “How soon do I want my child’s teacher to correctly observe that my child is experiencing a learning problem, be it large or small, and take steps, be they large or small, to intervene”? Tomorrow, Thursday, September 19, 2002, you have an opportunity to meet your children’s teachers as Gentry School District holds it’s first Parent-Teacher Conference Day of this school term. Please make time to attend.