

Chalkboard

By

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The last *Chalkboard* dealt with the duties of the school board, and indirectly, with the duties of the superintendent. That article ended like this- “It’s a tough role. Imagine having a job where you have to answer to your constituents who elected you, have a tremendous responsibility, but have no direct, day-to-day functioning in the organization you have been elected to direct. It’s worthy to note that the only pay they receive is a word of ‘Thanks’ from you.”

There is another group whose position is both similar and diametrically opposite to board members; that class of person is the school principal. I say similar because the school principal has, like a school board member, tremendous responsibility. Also similar is the fact that the principal has someone to answer to and also has those who answer to him or her. The school principal’s role is akin to the mid-level manager in any business. Most of the time that is good but some of the time it makes the person feel “caught in the middle”.

The opposite side of the coin from being a board member is that the school principal is the chief agent who directly oversees the day-to-day affairs of his or her respective campus. It is my experience that the school principal creates the tone and environment for that campus.

Arkansas Code Annotated 6-17-302 spells out the legal duties of the school principal as follows. “ (a) The district school board shall employ through written contract public school principals who shall hold valid supervisory or administrative certificates and who shall supervise the operation and management of the school and property as the board shall determine necessary. (b) The principal shall assume administrative responsibility and instructional leadership, under the supervision of the superintendent and in accordance with the legal rules and regulations of the board, for the planning, management, operation, and evaluation of the educational program of the attendance area to which he is assigned. (c) The principal shall submit recommendations to the superintendent regarding the appointment, assignment, promotion, transfer, and dismissal of all personnel assigned to the attendance area. (d) The principal shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the superintendent pursuant to the legal rules

and regulations of the board.” If a, b, and c were not enough there is that item d which basically translates into numerous other tasks and duties.

The four campus principals and the assistant principal at the high school are all quality educators. This group of five employees possesses 61 years of administrative experience and about 45 years of college education. Their personalities differ, their styles differ, but their commitment to being effective leaders is the same. I would not “swap” any one of the five for any principal I have worked with in my past or any that I currently know. I have told this group on several occasions that I do not wish to have their jobs nor do I wish to attempt to be a micro-manager.

Although the principal’s job warrants a paycheck per item a above, it also warrants that same “Thank You” as due a school board member!