

# Chalkboard

By

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When you read this Thanksgiving will be over and the rush to Christmas will be well underway. The wheel of destiny will have made series of small clicks as tomorrow became today then turned into yesterday and continued in like fashion to repeat that cycle.

Don't panic. This *Chalkboard* is not taking off in some arcane direction. For the last several weeks, if you have been reading along, you have had a good exposure to the work in progress at each campus, learned of efforts at the district level regarding federal and other programs, and have been made aware of indicators of student success as evidenced by reports of various test results. That series of articles should have left you with a sense of your school district's recent, but past, performance and have given you an overview of its present endeavors. But what lies ahead in the future? In what direction is our district heading and along what path will it travel?

I do not have that answer but you do. No need to reread the previous sentence, it is indeed you that knows the future of our school, not I.

You hold the answers to the future because it is your school not mine; I am just a paid employee of the district. In a farfetched analogy, I do hold the steering wheel but I do not own the bus, do not buy the diesel, and do not choose the destination. While I take pride in my driving, am faithful to do pre-trips, seek to avoid accidents, try to keep fuel in the tank, obey posted signs, and care for the passengers, I do not own the bus. You do. It is your school.

A few readers will have said at this point "Well, if that's true, if I own the bus, then how come I can't drive when I want to?" To you, I would give the same answer I used to give Jason and Jonathan when they were small boys and asked that question, "You can when you get a license to do so."

For the rest of you readers who aren't interested in driving but rather are interested in the trip, have I got a deal for you. Well, that's not exactly stated correctly. I should have written, "The school board, along with the Arkansas Leadership Academy, has devised a strategy with the purpose of seeking your input in the creation of a district mission statement." In my bus driver analogy, the school board plays the role of being responsible for securing the bus, keeping it maintained, hiring the driver, and planning the route. But with those responsibilities, they also have the duty of making sure there are passengers who want to ride this particular bus.

The details are being worked out now, but in January the school board is planning a series of public meetings to ask you, the parents and patrons of our district, some simple questions such as, “What direction do you want our district to go?” “What is the best way to get there?” “How will we know when we have arrived?” Those are just examples? But they express the concept of what it is that the school board wants to know from you.

I think you know that our school district has five electoral zones. As noted earlier, the details of these public meeting are being formulated. But in general, the board plans to hold these meetings out in the zone where you live. They wish to meet with you at some location where it is common for you to gather for other reasons. Perhaps a community building or a church will suffice for this purpose.

I can tell you up front that the school board is committed to giving you an opportunity to have a voice in the creation of a mission statement, a road map, if you will, for our district. They are not conducting interviews to hire a driver; they have one. Their purpose is not to ask you how well you have liked the trip so far, that part of the road can only be seen in the rearview mirror. They are concerned about what lies ahead and what route you want to take to get there.

There is no mandate, no regulation that is driving the school board to do this. They have chosen on their own accord to pursue you.

Hey, you own the bus!