

October 2013

The latest numbers are in and the growth I've been talking about in our school district continues at a steady pace. On September 6th of this school year, we had 71 more students in the district than we had on September 7th of last year. Those dates are chosen because they are after all students who have enrolled in other districts without withdrawing in Guthrie have been dropped from the rolls. This is on the heels of an increase of 138 students a year ago. In order to get the most accurate data, I asked for another child count to be taken on October 1st this year and found an ADDITIONAL 19 students had enrolled from September 6th of this year. This places district-wide enrollment at 3570 (an increase of over 200 students in 2 years).

In 2006 the Board of Education began a practice of not allowing students to transfer into Guthrie Public Schools if they lived in another district. This is a common practice when a district is growing and becoming overcrowded. At that time, a practice was established where the district would permit students who had been transferring into the district in the past to be "grandfathered" in and they could continue their education with GPS. Also, students whose parents work for GPS are allowed to transfer into the district. Finally, if a student at Guthrie High School moves after their junior year, they are allowed to finish their education with us on a transfer. In 2006 when this practice started, GPS had 3190 students and found it a necessity due to overcrowding. Since that time, we have had remarkable growth and added very few classrooms.

For the 2013-14 school year, there are 87 students that currently live in the Guthrie district but transfer to another district (this does not include students attending private school or students who are home schooled). There are multiple reasons for this to occur including convenience of where the parent works, irregular family situations, academic emphasis of another district or unfortunately dissatisfaction with Guthrie Public Schools.

I have heard from many parents wanting their children to attend our school system despite living outside the boundaries of our district. Unfortunately, we cannot honor their request due to the space limitations that currently exist. We are essentially an "exporter" of students to other districts. I recently heard from a parent who resides in our district but their child attends a private school outside our district boundaries. The student made a request of the parent to begin attending Guthrie Public Schools. The family intends to honor this request and their child will soon be a Bluejay! As a person who believes that education is competitive, I was very happy with this news.

Embracing the concept that education is competitive must become a community endeavor. This is a fundamental shift from over 100 years of educational philosophy but is the reality of today's education. As a school district we must continue current curriculum reforms to provide the best possible education, but just as importantly, we must strive to enhance our facilities so they may adequately support our reform efforts. Education has changed and what was good enough for us in 1924 or even 1975 is not adequate in 2013. The growth we are currently experiencing along with the ever present need to provide the best education for our students requires our community to evolve in support of our schools.